



# EDMUND BURKE

Selections

With Essays by

HAZLITT ARNOLD

& OTHERS.

With an Introduction and Notes by

A. M. D. HUGHES

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# C O N T E N T S

	PAGE
<b>INTRODUCTION . . . . .</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>DATES . . . . .</b>	<b>xiii</b>
Hazlitt's Essay on the Character of Burke . . . . .	1
From Coleridge's Essay on <i>The Grounds of Government</i> . . . . .	19
From Thomas Moore's <i>Memoirs of Sheridan</i> . . . . .	20
From De Quincey's Essay on <i>Rhetoric</i> . . . . .	22
From Macaulay's Essay on <i>Southey's Colloquies on Society</i> . . . . .	26
From Macaulay's Essay on <i>Bacon</i> . . . . .	28
From Matthew Arnold's Essay on <i>The Function of Criticism</i> . . . . .	30
Personal Estimates : by Johnson, 35 ; Goldsmith, 36 ; Wordsworth, 37.	
S E L E C T I O N S F R O M B U R K E	
<b>EARLY PHILOSOPHICAL TREATISES</b>	
The Servitude of the Poor . . . . .	40
Difference of the Sublime and Beautiful . . . . .	42
The Proper Effect of Poetry not Pictorial . . . . .	43
<b>HOME AFFAIRS</b>	
Government and the Temper of the People . . . . .	45
The System of Government by the Court . . . . .	48
The Perversion of the House of Commons . . . . .	50
The Taintness of the Peers . . . . .	53
The Practicable Remedies . . . . .	53
A Defence of Party . . . . .	56
Parliamentary Reform . . . . .	59
Members of Parliament and their Constituents . . . . .	63
The Province of Government . . . . .	65
Burke's Measures for Economical Reform ; their Moderation . . . . .	66
Economical Reform : the Royal Household . . . . .	67
Offices assigned as Pensions . . . . .	70
The Liberation of Irish Trade . . . . .	71
Catholic Emancipation in England . . . . .	74
Catholic Emancipation in Ireland . . . . .	75
On the Toleration of Dissenters . . . . .	76
Burke as the Mentor of his Party . . . . .	78
<b>AMERICA</b>	
Dramatis Personae : (a) George Grenville . . . . .	80
"          (b) Lord Chatham . . . . .	83
"          (c) Charles Townshend . . . . .	85
Progress and Enterprise of the Americans . . . . .	87
The Policy of Force . . . . .	90

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
<b>AMERICA (<i>continued</i>)—</b>	
The Main Element of the American Character . . . . .	91
You cannot cow the Americans by making them poor . . . . .	93
Nor can you prosecute them as criminals . . . . .	97
Conciliation the only remedy . . . . .	101
The Logical Chain of Burke's Policy . . . . .	104
The Well-tried Virtue of Compromise . . . . .	106
Freedom a Lucrative Principle . . . . .	108
Liberty the Bond of the British Empire . . . . .	108
<b>INDIA</b>	
The Peoples under British Rule . . . . .	111
The Peculiar Task of its Government . . . . .	113
Conquest and Arbitrary Power . . . . .	115
The Devastation of the Carnatic by Hyder Ali . . . . .	117
Charles James Fox, Benefactor of Nations . . . . .	125
<b>THE FRENCH REVOLUTION</b>	
Its Principal Agents : (a) Lawyers . . . . .	128
(b) The Monied Men . . . . .	129
(c) Men of Letters . . . . .	130
(d) Renegade Nobles . . . . .	131
Moral Insensibility . . . . .	132
October 6, 1789 . . . . .	133
Cromwell—a Contrast . . . . .	135
Political Shallowness . . . . .	137
A Prophecy . . . . .	139
On Natural Rights . . . . .	140
On the Social Contract . . . . .	141
Man's Rights and Duties not in his own hand . . . . .	143
On the People . . . . .	144
The Note of the British Constitution . . . . .	146
The Union of State and Church . . . . .	148
The Testimony of the Wise . . . . .	150
The Note of the British Character . . . . .	152
The Revolution to be combated by all Europe . . . . .	155
Debasement of the European Ambassadors suing for Peace . . . . .	158
The Indecipherable in the Revolution . . . . .	159
<b>HIS OWN LIFE</b>	
His Political Friendships . . . . .	160
Conscience and Popularity . . . . .	162
The Speech at Bristol declining the Poll, Sept. 9, 1780 . . . . .	163
The Consistency of his Political Views . . . . .	166
<i>Nitor in adversum</i> . . . . .	167
Himself and the Duke of Bedford: the Proportion of Utility to Reward . . . . .	169
NOTES . . . . .	177

## INTRODUCTION

IN July 1765 Burke became Private Secretary to Lord Rockingham at the outset of his first administration, and soon afterwards entered Parliament. He was thirty-six years old, and known, if at all, in the seats of power as only an Irish adventurer and a literary man, with his deep studies in history and economics lying by him like an uninvested fund. He rose almost at once to his extraordinary position as the familiar genius of the Rockingham Whigs. Many critics have lamented, like Goldsmith, that in choosing this career he missed his calling and enthralled his powers. But in his own eyes politics were a part of morals, where wisdom comes only with use, and party was the strait gate to the service of mankind.

In 1765 George III had already awakened the deep unrest, that abated only when it made a democracy. For close on fifty years the new dynasty had taken its policy from the Whigs, and yielded to the latent purpose of the Revolution that the king, in governing, should comply with his Ministers, and they with Parliament. The party of Walpole and Newcastle had conned the State through a dangerous sea ; but in course of time the factiousness and the gross jobbery of their rule alienated the best among themselves, and united the Tories with large numbers of men who desired simply a pure and active government. As early as 1738 the scheming Bolingbroke had projected a new Toryism in his *Idea of a Patriot King*, which, on its publication in 1749, he dedicated to Frederick Prince of Wales, whose eldest son, the future George III, was doted daily with its precepts. In this roseate forecast the Patriot King, when he comes, will look to the pattern of Queen Elizabeth, and the Peers and Commons who served her with one mind, and set his face against government by a party, ‘which must always end in the government of a *faction* . . . and in the oppression of the people.’ ‘The true image of a free people governed by a PATRIOT KING is that of a patriarchal family. . . . Instead of abetting the divisions of his people, he will endeavour to unite them,

and to be himself the centre of their union.' And this he will do without infringing the Constitution or the liberties of the subject. His 'limitations' will not be 'even felt as shackles by a good prince'; who will be rather inclined to increase liberty, and, by shorter Parliaments and a wider franchise, to gauge the mind of his People better and oftener. The Tory of 1760, in fact, was (by profession) the progressive, and the Whig, with his vested interest in the old suffrage, the obstructor. The specious and heroic 'patriotism' of Bolingbroke appealed equally to the average man and the bolder spirits who fretted for better things. It appealed to the elder Pitt, as afterwards to Disraeli. Of the various sections into which the Whigs of the sixties were dispersed, the 'Bedfords' and 'Grenvilles' were divided originally by personal motives from each other and from the main body under Rockingham; but the separation of Rockingham and Pitt was largely due to the ambition of the Great Commoner to cleanse and quicken government by a union of the parties and by some measure of electoral reform.

The reader will find in the extracts from the *Present Discontents* some account of George's procedure when he came to the throne. He should turn to Macaulay on Chatham and to Sir George Trevelyan's *Early Life of Charles James Fox* and his volumes on the American War for the full story of how the king disintegrated and routed his 'enemies' who would not have him the master of his kingdom; how he formed his own party of King's Friends and became its manager; how by all his means of punishment and reward he bought and bullied his Parliament; how he suffered his Whig Ministries up to the first opportunity of dismissing them; how in 1770 he dominated the Cabinet, and for twelve tragical years 'governed as well as reigned'; and how the war ended with his Pyrrhic victory of 1783, when the younger Pitt came in as the nation's servant and not primarily as his. No narrower mind or more dogged will has ever moulded our affairs.

'For my part,' said Lord Chatham, in 1770, when conscious of his own mistakes, 'I am grown old, and unable to fill any office of business; but this I am resolved on, that I will not even sit at Council but to meet Lord Rockingham. He, and he alone, has a knot of spotless

friends, such as ought to govern this kingdom.' Soon after the king's accession the corrupt following of Newcastle was converted by the purgation of defeat into a body of young men, who, in the words of a noble passage in this book (p. 161), 'would have adorned the most splendid period in your history ;—the Saviles, the Dowdeswells, the Wentworths, the Bentincks ; the Lennoxes, the Manchesters, the Keppels, the Saunderses ; the temperate, permanent, hereditary virtue of the whole house of Cavendish'. Such was Burke's party, which, but for two intervals of a few months each, was permanently in opposition. History has somewhat against it both in conduct and vision, but it far exceeded the ordinary measure of political probity. When the innocence of the new Toryism vanished at proof like a mirage, and the king's government embroiled both the country and its Colonies by assailing the first articles of their freedom, when the war in America stupefied men's consciences and inflamed their tempers, Rockingham and his friends might have washed their hands of it all and retired to their libraries and field sports. But duty constrained them to do battle for the nobler England through long years of discouragement and reproach. It was Burke's office to nurse their faith, to prompt their policy, and hold up a view of their creed that steeped it in humanity and touched it to finer issues in imagination and in thought. More than this, he acted continually as a free lance in the service of unpopular causes, going aside, alone or with few others, to the remedy of inveterate abuses and obscure wrongs. Some of his aspirations were too forward for the time—the freedom of trade, the remodelling of the criminal law, the abolition of slavery. Some he brought to pass by his own or other hands. He was the first of the financial reformers. The relief of the Roman Catholics in 1778, and the similar measure in Ireland in the same year, were both of his mootings. In 1780, in answer to his appeals and to Irish menaces, the laws that strangled Irish trade were rescinded. But the work in which he gloried most was the intense labour that brought home to himself and his countrymen the enormous crimes of the Company's servants in India, from 1772, when he led an inquiry into Indian affairs, to 1786, when he forced the trial of Hastings on both parties. To Matthew Arnold the charm in Burke was

the intellectual atmosphere and the ideas ; but a deep human-heartedness was 'the master-light of his seeing', and the spur to his labours. There were times in the House of Commons when the man of the 'heavy Quaker-like figure, with the scratch wig, the round spectacles, and the cumbrous roll of paper loading his pocket', who so often would empty the benches with the 'winding of his never-ending horn' (p. 37), could sway his audience with anger or pity. The never-published speech of 1778 on the excesses of the Indians in Burgoyne's army 'drew tears from the whole House', and the printed page supports Miss Burney's description of the blast of his indignation in the indictment of Hastings. These simpler motives mingled with others of a rarer kind : a devout pleasure in the graces and dignities of human nature, a deep sense of the goodness of order, and 'pious awe and trembling solicitude' for all great monuments of human thought and love, whether in politics or in faith.

The course of his political speculation turns sharply upon itself at the outbreak of the French Revolution, so that some of his critics have denied its continuity, and would prefer a metaphor like that used by Moore on p. 21—of 'a vast continent severed by some convulsion in nature'. The student of Burke must try this issue, and must set on one side the speeches and writings on the distemper of the Constitution, on America and India, and the minor matters of the first period, and on the other side the speeches and writings on France. In point of sentiment the difference in the later mood is plain, and is confessed by Burke himself in the beautiful analogy of Priam thinking only of Hector's body and driving his living children away (p. 167),—not that he loved freedom less, but his heart was bleeding for kingship and rank. But is there a difference between the earlier Burke and the later in principle, or as Coleridge puts it, 'a versatility of the principle with this occasion'? Is there, in fact, as Macaulay will have it, in the first place no principle at all, but sentiment and imagination first, and reason subsidiary? A few notes may be put down towards an answer.

In the first period he has always before him the all-adventuring energy, the happiness and the freedom of the Colonies ; or the ancient spirit of the people at home,

breathed and exercised through its liberal constitution and the historical parties. In America the tyrant had come with a legal right of taxing, which traversed the habit of self-government and the dearest tradition of British freedom. It was good in law, but fatal in policy. It was forgetting that in America there were men to deal with, and Englishmen. At home the same tyrant, and the theorists who helped him, would lay hands on the vital system of the State, purify it of party, and reduce it to a unison of good wills in chime with his own ; forgetting again that a governor is the servant of his subjects, and that man in Britain is neither an angel nor a slave. Burke's argument in either case is the folly of overriding with mere legality or a mere ideal the prejudices of a people, the customs on which its heart is set, its habits of action, and the institutions that give them play. In all this he is moving into possession of a new and profound idea of the State, as a living and organic whole, with its own way of growing and being, and its roots struck deep in the past. The only law it will take must be natural to it, a fulfilment of its own tendencies, and a gradual fulfilment. If it is restless, if the people are dissatisfied, the ruler should suppose that he is in fault, and has tried to train it the wrong way. 'In all disputes between the people and their rulers the presumption is at least upon a par in favour of the people' (p. 47). 'The people are the masters. They have only to express their wants at large and in gross. We [Parliament] are the skilful artificers to shape their desires into form.'<sup>1</sup> The tyrant and the theorist are alike in this, that they borrow of each other and grudge her kindly freedom to Nature. And the fault in each has a moral side to it. It is always some degree of the 'little mind' that 'goes ill with a great Empire', some failure of the imagination or the heart.

The speeches on India intensify a strain of sentiment in Burke that is always present more or less. The argument here is the sanctity of a people's life. Burke bids us before all things to 'love the little platoon' of our destiny ; but his charity and piety, spreading from their centre at home, took in 'the mysterious incorporation of the race' in all its communities, and saw in them all the unfolding of

<sup>1</sup> From a speech of 1780.

## INTRODUCTION

a Divine Will. India, with its ancient nations and creeds, and a culture in some ways higher than ours, touched that chord with a special power. He never thought we ought to withdraw from it. ‘There we are ; there we are placed by the Sovereign Disposer, and we must do the best we can in our situation. The situation of man is the preceptor of his duty.’ But the doings of the Company or its servants stirred his sense of sacrilege in all its depths, and discovered the prophet within the statesman.

So far Burke has dealt with constitutional or habitual liberty, for which his love was pure and passionate. But if we examine him on the statement that ‘the people are the masters’, and ask whether it means that the wishes of the majority are to prevail, the answer is sometimes indistinct, but as a rule definitely No. An inconsistency in terms, as well as in temper, between his earlier and later views can only be established if we insist on a few democratic pronouncements strewn here and there in the earlier writings. The People, he tells us, are the whole body politic, and not any one of its parts (pp. 144 f.) ; but he often uses the word of the majority or the masses, and it is to them that he seems at times to commit the sovereignty. But that is not his habitual mind. There are institutions so fast in the social frame that it appears impossible to change them without endangering it. When these are assailed, he calls in the People in the composite sense, and stipulates for the consent of the ‘natural aristocracy’ (p. 145) with the masses ; in which consent alone the permanent instinct of the society can speak—the instinct that has moved in the dead generations, as in the living, and is always wise (p. 6r). It follows that no revolution is right which the natural aristocracy do not approve, as it did approve, and execute, the ‘glorious transaction of 1688. Among the institutions thus safeguarded was the franchise under which Old Sarum returned its two members to Parliament, and Manchester, Sheffield, and Birmingham not one ; and the question of Parliamentary Reform is the test of his theory. The remedies that he devised instead of it (pp. 53 f.) are proposed with an evident mistrust and almost in despair. Nor can he have put much faith in the argument (p. 75), that as those who enjoyed the vote naturally participated in the thoughts and feelings of those

who did not, we had already ‘virtually’, if not actually, a universal suffrage. The real motive of his injunction against a reform of Parliament was a certain fear of humanity. His fear of man rude and common runs clean counter to his love for him when tempered by discipline and ennobled by power. For this reason he rejoices in liberty when established, and is eager to advance it, wherever practicable, to the golden measure of the English Revolution ; but there the wheels of change are stopped, or move only by meticulous degrees.

The effect upon him of the French Revolution, therefore, is nothing strange, or is strange only because it carried the two principles of fear and love to extremes. The Revolution came in the strength of ‘natural rights’. The franchise, for instance, is a right, as belonging to the outfit of personality. If a right, it cannot be unpractical, for a right, until it is won, is an irremissible hope, and rules the present from the future. Burke allows that there are such rights (pp. 140 f.) ; but he abominates them as a policy through slighting them as a hope. He puts them in the limbo of ‘metaphysical’ things, and does not see the difference between the attempt to apply them—the aspirations, as they were, of millions of men—and the attempt of George III to foist his legal fiction on America. His imagination is not indeed the master of his reason, as Macaulay says, but it is a great ally. When the Revolution came, he could no longer argue, in the extremity of his panic, for the strong presumption in favour of any movement by whole classes and great multitudes ; he could not even credit the multitudes with a normal humanity. Arnold has highly extolled the passage (pp. 159, 160), where for once he suspends his curses, lest he should fight against God. But it was only an interval in the spell of hate. Miss Burney noticed that talking of the Revolution gave his face ‘the expression of a man who is going to defend himself from murderers’.

To all minds, therefore, in the school of Shelley or Mazzini he is one of those who did not ‘ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward’. But he remains to them a venerable figure. Hazlitt, Radical as he was, has insisted with characteristic fairness on the immense value of his doctrine, so far as it will go. He is the classic witness

of Conservatism, to the power of which his conception of the organic state, though infirmly held and sometimes lost (pp. 150, 151), became in time an immeasurable aid. It is not only by that conception that he has one foot, as it were, in the next century, but also by spiritual sensibility. To the men of his own time the staple of all human history was the failure of hope and the frailty of will, and no one who belonged to it could have known the serene faith in man which sustained Wordsworth when he too fell foul of the Revolution. And if Burke had attained it, the force of that event to an imagination peculiarly susceptible of power and terror<sup>1</sup> would have taxed it hard. But as the light intensifies the shade, Burke's fear and hate are the other side of a great devotion. He saw the new philosophy making war on the ethics as well as on the governments of Europe; and felt that the life of the spirit was at stake. He thought he defended much more than this institution or that. Lockhart tells how Scott, after a speech at a meeting in defence of some legal usages then threatened with reform, was twitted by Jeffrey and others on his earnest eloquence. 'No, no,' he exclaimed, 'tis no laughing matter. Little by little, whatever you may do, may be you will destroy and undermine the nothing that makes Scotland. Scotland will remain'; and burst into tears. Burke, too, stood sentinel at the outposts of the old faith and polity, and trembled in the same way for 'the works of God established in order and beauty' (p. 78).

<sup>1</sup> Not a pictorial imagination, as Macaulay says it is. In the description of the Mahratta Cavalry in the Carnatic (pp. 117 f.) not one image is visually distinct.

## D A T E S

- 1729 (? end of 1728). Edmund Burke born in Dublin of Irish parents; his father, a solicitor of good standing and a Protestant; his mother (maiden name Nagle), a Roman Catholic. With his two brothers he is brought up in the father's creed; his only sister in the mother's.
- 1741- Attends school of Abraham Shackleton, a Quaker from Yorkshire, at Ballitore, 10 miles from Dublin.
- 1743-5. At Trinity College, Dublin; years spent in desultory and excursive reading; and barren of academic distinction.
1750. Migrates to London, and lives at first in the Middle Temple as a student of law. Presently abandons his study for literature. Period of obscurity and poverty follows.
1756. Marries Jane Mary Nugent, an Irishwoman, and, until her marriage a Roman Catholic. (Their eldest son, Richard, born 1758; a second son died in infancy.) Publishes *A Vindication of Natural Society* (see p. 179) and *An Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas on the Sublime and Beautiful*.
1758. Undertakes the production of the *Annual Register*, for which he continued to write until about 1788.
1759. Makes acquaintance with William Edward Hamilton, 'Single-speech Hamilton', a prominent politician, and becomes his private assistant.
- 1761-4. In Ireland as private secretary to Hamilton, now Chief Secretary to the Earl of Halifax, 1st Lieutenant.
1764. Burke leaves Ireland with Hamilton, who had lost his office. Becomes a member, with Johnson, Reynolds, Goldsmith and others, of the 'Literary Club'.
1765. Parliament passes the Stamp Act for America. Burke breaks with Hamilton, who refused him a margin of time for literary work (April). Becomes private secretary to the Marquis of Rockingham on the formation of his first Ministry, after the fall of George Grenville (July). Enters Parliament as member for Wendover (December).
1766. Temporary settlement of the American question by Rockingham's Ministry through (a) a Declaratory Act, affirming authority of Britain over the Colonies in legislation and taxation, and (b) the repeal of the Stamp Act. Rockingham dismissed (June 7). A coalition government is now

- formed by Pitt under the Duke of Grafton as nominal chief. Burke is offered a place in the new Ministry, but decides to follow his friends.
1767. Chatham disabled by illness (February). Act for taxing American imports passed by Charles Townshend, Chancellor of the Exchequer (May). Burke the driving influence in his party.
1768. Chatham leaves the Ministry (October). Burke purchases the estate of Gregories at Beaconsfield for a considerable sum.
- 1768-9. Struggle of the House of Commons with the constituency of Middlesex over the election of Wilkes.
1769. *Observations on a late Publication on the Present State of the Nation.*
1770. All the American import duties, except that on tea, are removed (March). *Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents* published in April. New Ministry under Lord North.
1771. Contends for freedom of speech in supporting an amendment on the law of libel, and for ceding to the Press the right of reporting debates in Parliament.
1772. Opposes petition of certain of the clergy to be relieved from subscription to the articles.
1773. Visits France, and is entertained by Madame du Deffand, and meets the Encyclopaedists in the *salon* of Mlle. de l'Esperasse (February). Supports Bill for relief of Protestant Dissenters from the provisions of the Test Act.
1774. *Speech on American Taxation* (April 19). Fox, having left North's Ministry in 1772, joins the Rockingham Whigs under Burke's influence. Burke returned for Bristol at the General Election (November).
1775. His Resolutions for Conciliation with the Colonies proposed and lost (March 22). War in America begins with the Battle of Lexington (April).
1776. Supports two motions for Conciliation.
1777. *Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol.*
1778. Powerful speech against employment of Indians in America (February). Death of Lord Chatham (May 11). Burke offends his constituents by supporting measures to relieve Irish trade and remove penalties on Roman Catholics.
1780. Brings in Bill for Economical Reform (February; rejected in the Lords next session). Loses his seat at Bristol (September), and is elected for Malton.
1782. North resigns (March); Rockingham Ministry, with Burke Paymaster of the Forces. His economical reforms, in a reduced form, become law.

- July 1, death of Rockingham. Shelburne Ministry.  
Resignation of Fox and Burke.
- Britain acknowledges Independence of the United States  
(December).
1783. Preliminaries of the Peace of Versailles signed (January). Coalition of Fox and North. Shelburne resigns (February 24). The Portland Ministry; Burke again Paymaster. Speech on Fox's East India Bill (December 1). The Bill is lost in the Lords, and the Ministry falls (December 18). Pitt Prime Minister.
1785. Speech on the Nabob of Arcot's debts (February 28). Fac-tiously opposes Pitt's resolutions for liberating Irish commerce (July).
1786. Burke moves impeachment of Warren Hastings (June 1).
1788. Trial of Warren Hastings begins (February 13). Burke supports motion for inquiry into the slave-trade, and desires its total abolition (May).
1789. Meeting of the Estates General at Versailles (May). Storm of the Bastille (July 14). Abolition of feudal rights in France (August 4). The king and queen forced to ride in triumphal procession from Versailles to Paris (October 6).
1790. Debate in House of Commons on Army Estimates; Burke differs from Fox on conduct of French Army, and breaks with Sheridan (February 9). Burke opposes Fox's motion to repeal the Test Act (March 2). Feast of the Federation in Paris (July). *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (published November 1).
1791. Letter to a Member of the National Assembly (January). Burke renounces his friendship with Fox (May 6). Flight of Louis XVI to Varennes (June). *Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs* (published August). *Thoughts on French Affairs* (written December).
1792. Letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe on Roman Catholic disabilities in Ireland (written January). France declares war on Austria and Prussia (April). Overthrow of the French Monarchy (August 10). Burke, during passage of the Aliens Bill, enacts his 'dagger-scene' (December 28).
1793. Execution of Louis XVI (January 21). France declares war on England (February 1). Committee of Public Safety instituted (April). Fall of the Girondins (June); execution of Marie Antoinette (October); Reign of Terror (begins November).
1794. Burke concludes his part in the impeachment of Hastings by the speech in answer to the defence (April). Retires from

- Parliament (July). Formal union of Portland Whigs with the Ministry (July). Fall of Robespierre (July 28) ; death of Burke's son Richard (August). Grant of his first pension of £1,200.
1795. Grant of two further pensions, amounting together to £2,500. Peace concluded at Basel between Prussia and France (April 5). Acquittal of Hastings (April 23). Emergence of Napoleon Buonaparte, who suppresses the Insurrection of the Middle Classes against the Convention (Vendémiaire 13 : October 5). *Thoughts and Details on Scarcity* (presented to Pitt November).
1796. *A Letter to a Noble Lord* (February). *Letters on a Regicide Peace*, i and ii.
1797. Burke dies, July 9.

H A Z L I T T ' S *Essay*  
*O N T H E C H A R A C T E R O F B U R K E*

(First prefixed to extracts from Burke in *The Eloquence of the British Senate*, 1807; afterwards included in *Winterslow*, 1839.)

THERE is no single speech of Mr. Burke which can convey a satisfactory idea of his powers of mind: to do him justice, it would be necessary to quote all his works; the only specimen of Burke is, *all that he wrote*. With respect to most other speakers, a specimen is generally enough, or more than enough. When you are acquainted with their manner, and see what proficiency they have made in the mechanical exercise of their profession, with what facility they can borrow a simile, or round a period, how dexterously they can argue, and object, and rejoin, you are satisfied; there is no other difference in their speeches than what arises from the difference of the subjects. But this was not the case with Burke. He brought his subjects along with him; he drew his materials from himself. The only limits which circumscribed his variety were the stores of his own mind. His stock of ideas did not consist of a few meagre facts, meagrely stated, of half a dozen commonplaces tortured into a thousand different ways; but his mine of wealth was a profound understanding, inexhaustible as the human heart, and various as the sources of human nature. He therefore enriched every subject to which he applied himself, and new subjects were only the occasions of calling forth fresh powers of mind which had not been before exerted. It would therefore be in vain to look for the proof of his powers in any one of his speeches

or writings : they all contain some additional proof of power. In speaking of Burke, then, I shall speak of the whole compass and circuit of his mind—not of that small part or section of him which I have been able to give : to do otherwise would be like the story of the man who put the brick in his pocket, and thinking to show it as the model of a house. I have been able to manage pretty well with respect to all my other speakers, and curtailed them down without remorse. It was easy to reduce them within certain limits, to fix their spirit, and condense their variety ; by having addressed the public than in addressing the House of Commons. Burke was raised into public life ; and he seems in more at ease, to have a fuller possession of his faculties in addressing the public than in addressing the House of Commons. For this reason, most of his speeches have so great a man. For this reason, most of his speeches have a sort of parliamentary preambule to them : he seems fond of cogueting with the House of Commons, and is perpetually calling the Speaker out to dance a minuet with him before he begins. There is also something like an attempt to stimulate the superficial dullness of his hearers by exciting their surprise, by running into extirvagance : and he sometimes demeans himself by condescending to what may be considered as bordering too much upon buffoonery, for the amusement of the company. Those lines of Milton were admirably applied to him by some one—“ The House of Commons : he was eminentlly qualified to sit in the latter.” The truth is, that he was out of his place in the elephant to make them sport wreathed his proboscis 30 were admiration to apply to him by some one—“ The the amusements of the company.

Burke's writings are better than his speeches, and indeed Proteus, or confine the roving flight of genius ?

was only the same thing over again. But who can bind a certain quantity given, you might infer all the rest ; it is to fix their spirit, and condense their variety ; by having addressed the public than in addressing the House of Commons. Burke was raised into public life ; and he seems in more at ease, to have a fuller possession of his faculties in addressing the public than in addressing the House of Commons. For this reason, most of his speeches have so great a man. For this reason, most of his speeches have a sort of parliamentary preambule to them : he seems fond of cogueting with the House of Commons, and is perpetually calling the Speaker out to dance a minuet with him before he begins. There is also something like an attempt to stimulate the superficial dullness of his hearers by exciting their surprise, by running into extirvagance : and he sometimes demeans himself by condescending to what may be considered as bordering too much upon buffoonery, for the amusement of the company. Those lines of Milton were admirably applied to him by some one—“ The House of Commons : he was eminentlly qualified to sit in the latter.” The truth is, that he was out of his place in the elephant to make them sport wreathed his proboscis 30 were admiration to apply to him by some one—“ The the amusements of the company.

with that motley crew of knights, citizens, and burgesses. He could not be said to be 'native and endued unto that clement'. He was above it; and never appeared like himself but when, forgetful of the idle clamours of party, and of the little views of little men, he applied to his country and the enlightened judgement of mankind.

I am not going to make an idle panegyric on Burke (he has no need of it); but I cannot help looking upon him as the chief boast and ornament of the English House of Commons. What has been said of him is, I think, strictly 10 true, that 'he was the most eloquent man of his time: his wisdom was greater than his eloquence'. The only public man that in my opinion can be put in any competition with him, is Lord Chatham; and he moved in a sphere so very remote that it is almost impossible to compare them. But though it would perhaps be difficult to determine which of them excelled most in his particular way, there is nothing in the world more easy than to point out in what their peculiar excellences consisted. They were in every respect the reverse of each other. Chatham's eloquence 20 was popular: his wisdom was altogether plain and practical. Burke's eloquence was that of the poet; of the man of high and unbounded fancy: his wisdom was profound and contemplative. Chatham's eloquence was calculated to make men *act*: Burke's was calculated to make them *think*. Chatham could have roused the fury of a multitude, and wielded their physical energy as he pleased: Burke's eloquence carried conviction into the mind of the retired and lonely student, opened the recesses of the human breast, and lighted up the face of nature around him. Chatham supplied his hearers with motives to immediate action: Burke furnished them with *reasons* for action which might have little effect upon them at the time, but for which they would be the wiser and better all their lives after. In research, in originality, in variety of knowledge,

in richness of invention, in depth and comprehension of mind, Burke had as much the advantage of Lord Chatham as he was excelled by him in plain common sense, in strong feeling, in steadiness of purpose, in vehemence, in warmth, in enthusiasm, and energy of mind. Burke was the man of genius, of fine sense, and subtle reasoning ; Chatham was a man of clear understanding, of strong sense, and violent passions. Burke's mind was satisfied with speculation : Chatham's was essentially *active* ; it could not rest without an object. The power which governed Burke's mind was his Imagination ; that which gave its *impetus* to Chatham was Will. The one was almost the creature of pure intellect, the other of physical temperament.

There are two very different ends which a man of genius may propose to himself, either in writing or speaking, and which will accordingly give birth to very different styles. He can have but one of these two objects ; either to enrich or strengthen the mind ; either to furnish us with new ideas, to lead the mind into new trains of thought, to which it was before unused, and which it was incapable of striking out for itself ; or else to collect and embody what we already knew, to rivet our old impressions more deeply ; to make what was before plain still plainer, and to give to that which was familiar all the effect of novelty. In the one case we receive an accession to the stock of our ideas ; in the other, an additional degree of life and energy is infused into them : our thoughts continue to flow in the same channels, but their pulse is quickened and invigorated. I do not know how to distinguish these different styles better than by calling them severally the inventive and refined, or the impressive and vigorous styles. It is only the subject-matter of eloquence, however, which is allowed to be remote or obscure. The things themselves may be subtle and recondite, but they must be dragged out of their obscurity and brought struggling to the light ; they

must be rendered plain and palpable (as far as it is in the wit of man to do so), or they are no longer eloquence. That which by its natural impenetrability, and in spite of every effort, remains dark and difficult, which is impervious to every ray, on which the imagination can shed no lustre, which can be clothed with no beauty, is not a subject for the orator or poet. At the same time it cannot be expected that abstract truths or profound observations should ever be placed in the same strong and dazzling points of view as natural objects and mere matters of fact. It is enough 10 if they receive a reflex and borrowed lustre, like that which cheers the first dawn of morning, where the effect of surprise and novelty gilds every object, and the joy of beholding another world gradually emerging out of the gloom of night, 'a new creation rescued from his reign,' fills the mind with a sober rapture. Philosophical eloquence is in writing what *chiaro-scuro* is in painting; he would be a fool who should object that the colours in the shaded part of a picture were not so bright as those on the opposite side; the eye of the connoisseur receives an equal delight 20 from both, balancing the want of brilliancy and effect with the greater delicacy of the tints, and difficulty of the execution. In judging of Burke, therefore, we are to consider, first, the style of eloquence which he adopted, and, secondly, the effects which he produced with it. If he did not produce the same effects on vulgar minds as some others have done, it was not for want of power, but from the turn and direction of his mind.<sup>1</sup> It was because his subjects, his ideas, his arguments, were less vulgar. The question is not whether he brought certain truths equally home to us, 30 but how much nearer he brought them than they were before. In my opinion, he united the two extremes of

<sup>1</sup> For instance, he produced less effect on the mob that compose the English House of Commons, than Chatham or Fox, or even Pitt.

The subtlety of his mind was undoubtedly that which rendered Burke a less popular writer and speaker than he otherwise would have been. It weakened the impression of his observations upon others, but I cannot admit that

anything from their real weight or solidity. Coarse minds weaken the observations themselves; that it took

think all that is subtle futile: that because it is not gross

and obvious and palpable to the senses, it is therefore light

to and of no importance in the real affairs of life; thus making their own confined understandings the

measure of truth, and supposing that whatever they do not

distinctly perceive is nothing. Senecca, who was not one

of the vulgar, also says, that subtle truths are those which

have the least substance in them, and consequently appear

nearer to nonentity. But for my own part I cannot help

thinking that the most important truths must be the most

refined and subtle; for that very reason, that they must

rehearsed and subtlety, for that very reason, that they must

comprehend a great number of particulars, and instead of

referring to any distinct or positive fact, must point out

the combined effects of an extensive chain of causes,

operating gradually, remotely, and collectively, and there-

fore imperceptibly. General principles are not the less true

or important because they elude immediate

observation; they are like the air, which is not the less true

because we neither see nor feel it, or like that

secret influence which binds the world together, and holds

the planets in their orbits. The very same persons who are

idle and impertinent, you will the next moment hear

exclaiming bitterly against the baleful effects of new-

fangled systems of philosophy, or gravely descanting on

the immense importance of instituting sound principles of

morality into the mind. It would not be a bold conjecture,

whatever it may be, that Burke's strength in a higher degree than any other

but an obvious truism, to say, that all the great changes which have been brought about in the moral world, either for the better or worse, have been introduced, not by the bare statement of facts, which are things already known, and which must always operate nearly in the same manner, but by the development of certain opinions and abstract principles of reasoning on life and manners, or the origin of society and man's nature in general, which being obscure and uncertain, vary from time to time, and produce corresponding changes in the human mind. They are the <sup>10</sup> wholesome dew and rain, or the mildew and pestilence that silently destroy. To this principle of generalization all wise lawgivers, and the systems of philosophers, owe their influence.

It has always been with me a test of the sense and candour of any one belonging to the opposite party, whether he allowed Burke to be a great man. Of all the persons of this description that I have ever known, I never met with above one or two who would make this concession ; whether it was that party feelings ran too high to <sup>20</sup> admit of any real candour, or whether it was owing to an essential vulgarity in their habits of thinking, they all seemed to be of opinion that he was a wild enthusiast, or a hollow sophist, who was to be answered by bits of facts, by smart logic, by shrewd questions, and idle songs. They looked upon him as a man of disordered intellects, because he reasoned in a style to which they had not been used, and which confounded their dim perceptions. If you said that though you differed with him in sentiment, yet you thought him an admirable reasoner, and a close observer <sup>30</sup> of human nature, you were answered with a loud laugh, and some hackneyed quotation. 'Alas ! Leviathan was not so tamed !' They did not know whom they had to contend with. The corner-stone, which the builders rejected, became the head-corner, though to the Jews

a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness ; for, indeed, I cannot discover that he was much better understood by those of his own party, if we may judge from the little affinity there is between his mode of reasoning and theirs. The simple clue to all his reasonings on polities is, I think, as follows. He did not agree with some writers that that mode of government is necessarily the best which is the cheapest. He saw in the construction of society other principles at work, and other capacities of fulfilling 10 the desires, and perfecting the nature of man, besides those of securing the equal enjoyment of the means of animal life, and doing this at as little expense as possible. He thought that the wants and happiness of men were not to be provided for, as we provide for those of a herd of cattle, merely by attending to their physical necessities. He thought more nobly of his fellows. He knew that man had affections and passions and powers of imagination, as well as hunger and thirst, and the sense of heat and cold. He took his idea of political society from the pattern of private 20 life, wishing, as he himself expresses it, to incorporate the domestic charities with the orders of the state, and to blend them together. He strove to establish an analogy between the compact that binds together the community at large, and that which binds together the several families that compose it. He knew the rules that form the basis of private morality are not founded in reason, that is, in the abstract properties of those things which are the subjects of them, but in the nature of man, and his capacity of being affected by certain things from habit, from imagina- 30 tion, and sentiment, as well as from reason.

Thus, the reason why a man ought to be attached to his wife and children is not, surely, that they are better than others (for in this case every one else ought to be of the same opinion), but because he must be chiefly interested in those things which are nearest to him, and with which he

is best acquainted, since his understanding cannot reach equally to everything ; because he must be most attached to those objects which he has known the longest, and which by their situation have actually affected him the most, not those which in themselves are the most affecting whether they have ever made any impression on him or no ; that is, because he is by his nature the creature of habit and feeling, and because it is reasonable that he should act in conformity to his nature. Burke was so far right in saying that it is no objection to an institution that it is founded 10 in *prejudice*, but the contrary, if that prejudice is natural and right ; that is, if it arises from those circumstances which are properly subjects of feeling and association, not from any defect or perversion of the understanding in those things which fall strictly under its jurisdiction. On this profound maxim he took his stand. Thus he contended, that the prejudice in favour of nobility was natural and proper, and fit to be encouraged by the positive institutions of society : not on account of the real or personal merit of the individuals, but because such an institution 20 has a tendency to enlarge and raise the mind, to keep alive the memory of past greatness, to connect the different ages of the world together, to carry back the imagination over a long tract of time, and feed it with the contemplation of remote events : because it is natural to think highly of that which inspires us with high thoughts, which has been connected for many generations with splendour, and affluence, and dignity, and power, and privilege. He also conceived, that by transferring the respect from the person to the thing, and thus rendering it steady and permanent, 30 the mind would be habitually formed to sentiments of deference, attachment, and fealty, to whatever else demanded its respect : that it would be led to fix its view on what was elevated and lofty, and be weaned from that low and narrow jealousy which never willingly or heartily

admits of any superiority in others, and is glad of every opportunity to bring down all excellence to a level with its own miserable standard. Nobility did not, therefore, exist to the prejudice of the other orders of the state, but by and for them. The inequality of the different orders of society did not destroy the unity and harmony of the whole. The health and well-being of the moral world was to be promoted by the same means as the beauty of the natural world ; by contrast, by change, by light and shade, by variety of parts, by order and proportion. To think of reducing all mankind to the same insipid level, seemed to him the same absurdity as to destroy the inequalities of surface in a country, for the benefit of agriculture and commerce. In short, he believed that the interests of men in society should be consulted, and their several stations and employments assigned, with a view to their nature, not as physical, but as moral beings, so as to nourish their hopes, to lift their imagination, to enliven their fancy, to rouse their activity, to strengthen their virtue, and to furnish the greatest number of objects of pursuit and means of enjoyment to beings constituted as man is, consistently with the order and stability of the whole.

The same reasoning might be extended farther. I do not say that his arguments are conclusive : but they are profound and *true*, as far as they go. There may be disadvantages and abuses necessarily interwoven with his scheme, or opposite advantages of infinitely greater value, to be derived from another order of things and state of society. This, however, does not invalidate either the truth or importance of Burke's reasoning ; since the advantages he points out as connected with the mixed form of government are really and necessarily inherent in it : since they are compatible, in the same degree, with no other ; since the principle itself on which he rests his argument (whatever we may think of the application) is of

the utmost weight and moment ; and since, on whichever side the truth lies, it is impossible to make a fair decision without having the opposite side of the question clearly and fully stated to us. This Burke has done in a masterly manner. He presents to you one view or face of society. Let him who thinks he can, give the reverse side with equal force, beauty, and clearness. It is said, I know, that truth is *one* ; but to this I cannot subscribe, for it appears to me that truth is *many*. There are as many truths as there are things and causes of action and contradictory principles at work in society. In making up the account of good and evil, indeed, the final result must be one way or the other ; but the particulars on which that result depends are infinite and various.

It will be seen from what I have said, that I am very far from agreeing with those who think that Burke was a man without understanding, and a merely florid writer. There are two causes which have given rise to this calumny ; namely, that narrowness of mind which leads men to suppose that the truth lies entirely on the side of their own <sup>20</sup> opinions, and that whatever does not make for them is absurd and irrational ; secondly, a trick we have of confounding reason with judgement, and supposing that it is merely the province of the understanding to pronounce sentence, and not to give evidence, or argue the case ; in short, that it is a passive, not an active faculty. Thus there are persons who never run into any extravagance, because they are so buttressed up with the opinions of others on all sides, that they cannot lean much to one side or the other ; they are so little moved with any kind of <sup>30</sup> reasoning, that they remain at an equal distance from every extreme, and are never very far from the truth, because the slowness of their faculties will not suffer them to make much progress in error. These are persons of great judgement. The scales of the mind are pretty sure to

remain even, when there is nothing in them. In this sense of the word, Burke must be allowed to have wanted judgement, by all those who think that he was wrong in his conclusions. The accusation of want of judgement, in fact, only means that you yourself are of a different opinion. But if in arriving at one error he discovered a hundred truths, I should consider myself a hundred times more indebted to him than if, stumbling on that which I consider as the right side of the question, he had committed a <sup>10</sup> hundred absurdities in striving to establish his point. I speak of him now merely as an author, or as far as I and other readers are concerned with him ; at the same time, I should not differ from any one who may be disposed to contend that the consequences of his writings as instruments of political power have been tremendous, fatal, such as no exertion of wit or knowledge or genius can ever counteract or atone for.

Burke also gave a hold to his antagonists by mixing up sentiment and imagery with his reasoning ; so that being <sup>20</sup> unused to such a sight in the region of polities, they were deceived, and could not discern the fruit from the flowers. Gravity is the cloak of wisdom ; and those who have nothing else think it an insult to affect the one without the other, because it destroys the only foundation on which their pretensions are built. The easiest part of reason is dullness ; the generality of the world are therefore concerned in discouraging any example of unnecessary brilliancy that might tend to show that the two things do not always go together. Burke in some measure dissolved the <sup>30</sup> spell. It was discovered, that his gold was not the less valuable for being wrought into elegant shapes, and richly embossed with curious figures ; that the solidity of a building is not destroyed by adding to it beauty and ornament ; and that the strength of a man's understanding is not always to be estimated in exact proportion to his want of

imagination. His understanding was not the less real, because it was not the only faculty he possessed. He justified the description of the poet—

How charming is divine philosophy !  
Not harsh and crabbed as dull fools suppose,  
But musical as is Apollo's lute !

Those who object to this union of grace and beauty with reason, are in fact weak-sighted people, who cannot distinguish the noble and majestic form of Truth from that of her sister Folly, if they are dressed both alike ! But 10 there is always a difference even in the adventitious ornaments they wear, which is sufficient to distinguish them.

Burke was so far from being a gaudy or flowery writer that he was one of the severest writers we have. His words are the most like things ; his style is the most strictly suited to the subject. He unites every extreme and every variety of composition ; the lowest and the meanest words and descriptions with the highest. He exults in the display of power, in showing the extent, the force, and intensity of his ideas ; he is led on by the mere impulse and vehemence of his fancy, not by the affectation of dazzling his readers by gaudy conceits or pompous images. He was completely carried away by his subject. He had no other object but to produce the strongest impression on his reader, by giving the truest, the most characteristic, the fullest, and most forcible description of things, trusting to the power of his own mind to mould them into grace and beauty. He did not produce a splendid effect by setting fire to the light vapours that float in the regions of fancy, as the chemists make fine colours with phosphorus, but by 30 the eagerness of his blows struck fire from the flint, and melted the hardest substances in the furnace of his imagination. The wheels of his imagination did not catch fire from the rottenness of the materials, but from the rapidity of

their motion. One would suppose, to hear people talk of Burke, that his style was such as would have suited the *Lady's Magazine*; soft, smooth, showy, tender, insipid, full of fine words, without any meaning. The essence of the gaudy or glittering style consists in producing a momentary effect by fine words and images brought together, without order or connexion. Burke most frequently produced an effect by the remoteness and novelty of his combinations, by the force of contrast, by the striking manner in which the most opposite and unpromising materials were harmoniously blended together; not by laying his hands on all the fine things he could think of, but by bringing together those things which he knew would blaze out into glorious light by their collision. The florid style is a mixture of affectation and commonplace. Burke's was a union of untameable vigour and originality.

Burke was not a verbose writer. If he sometimes multiplies words, it is not for want of ideas, but because there are no words that fully express his ideas, and he tries to do it as well as he can by different ones. He had nothing of the *set* or formal style, the measured cadence, and stately phraseology of Johnson, and most of our modern writers. This style, which is what we understand by the *artificial*, is all in one key. It selects a certain set of words to represent all ideas whatever, as the most dignified and elegant, and excludes all others as low and vulgar. The words are not fitted to the things, but the things to the words. Everything is seen through a false medium. It is putting a mask on the face of nature, which may indeed hide some specks and blemishes, but takes away all beauty, delicacy, and variety. It destroys all dignity or elevation, because nothing can be raised where all is on a level, and completely destroys all force, expression, truth, and character, by arbitrarily confounding the differences of things, and reduc-

ing everything to the same insipid standard. To suppose that this stiff uniformity can add anything to real grace or dignity is like supposing that the human body, in order to be perfectly graceful, should never deviate from its upright posture. Another mischief of this method is, that it confounds all ranks in literature. Where there is no room for variety, no discrimination, no nicety to be shown in matching the idea with its proper word, there can be no room for taste or elegance. A man must easily learn the art of writing when every sentence is to be cast in the <sup>10</sup> same mould : where he is only allowed the use of one word he cannot choose wrong, nor will he be in much danger of making himself ridiculous by affectation or false glitter, when, whatever subject he treats of, he must treat of it in the same way. This indeed is to wear golden chains for the sake of ornament.

Burke was altogether free from the pedantry which I have here endeavoured to expose. His style was as original, as expressive, as rich and varied, as it was possible ; his combinations were as exquisite, as playful, as happy, <sup>20</sup> as unexpected, as bold and daring, as his fancy. If anything, he ran into the opposite extreme of too great an inequality, if truth and nature could ever be carried to an extreme.

Those who are best acquainted with the writings and speeches of Burke will not think the praise I have here bestowed on them exaggerated. Some proof will be found of this in the following extracts. But the full proof must be sought in his works at large, and particularly in the *Thoughts on the Discontents* ; in his *Reflections on the French Revolution* ; in his *Letter to the Duke of Bedford* ; and in the *Regicide Peace*. The two last of these are perhaps the most remarkable of all his writings, from the contrast they afford to each other. The one is the most delightful exhibition of wild and brilliant fancy that is to be found in English

prose, but it is too much like a beautiful picture painted upon gauze ; it wants something to support it : the other is without ornament, but it has all the solidity, the weight, the gravity of a judicial record. It seems to have been written with a certain constraint upon himself, and to show those who said he could not *reason* that his arguments might be stripped of their ornaments without losing anything of their force. It is certainly, of all his works, that in which he has shown most power of logical deduction,  
10 and the only one in which he has made any important use of facts. In general he certainly paid little attention to them : they were the playthings of his mind. He saw them as he pleased, not as they were ; with the eye of the philosopher or the poet, regarding them only in their general principle, or as they might serve to decorate his subject. This is the natural consequence of much imagination : things that are probable are elevated into the rank of realities. To those who can reason on the essences of things, or who can invent according to nature, the exper-  
20 mental proof is of little value. This was the case with Burke. In the present instance, however, he seems to have forced his mind into the service of facts ; and he succeeded completely. His comparison between our connexion with France or Algiers, and his account of the conduct of the war, are as clear, as convincing, as forcible examples of this kind of reasoning, as are anywhere to be met with. Indeed I do not think there is anything in Fox (whose mind was purely historical), or in Chatham (who attended to feelings more than facts), that will bear a com-  
30 parison with them.

Burke has been compared to Cicero—I do not know for what reason. Their excellences are as different, and indeed as opposite, as they can well be. Burke had not the polished elegance, the glossy neatness, the artful regularity, the exquisite modulation of Cicero. He had a thousand times

more richness and originality of mind, more strength and pomp of diction.

It has been well observed, that the ancients had no word that properly expresses what we mean by the word *genius*. They perhaps had not the thing. Their minds appear to have been too exact, too retentive, too minute and subtle, too sensible to the external differences of things, too passive under their impressions, to admit of those bold and rapid combinations, those lofty flights of fancy, which, glancing from heaven to earth, unite the most opposite extremes, 10 and draw the happiest illustrations from things the most remote. Their ideas were kept too confined and distinct by the material form or vehicle in which they were conveyed to unite cordially together, to be melted down in the imagination. Their metaphors are taken from things of the same class, not from things of different classes; the general analogy, not the individual feeling, directs them in their choice. Hence, as Dr. Johnson observed, their similes are either repetitions of the same idea, or so obvious and general as not to lend any additional force to it; as 20 when a huntress is compared to Diana, or a warrior rushing into battle to a lion rushing on his prey. Their *forte* was exquisite art and perfect imitation. Witness their statues and other things of the same kind. But they had not that high and enthusiastic fancy which some of our own writers have shown. For the proof of this, let any one compare Milton and Shakespeare with Homer and Sophocles, or Burke with Cicero.

It may be asked whether Burke was a poet. He was so only in the general vividness of his fancy, and in richness 30 of invention. There may be poetical passages in his works, but I certainly think that his writings in general are quite distinct from poetry; and that for the reason before given, namely, that the subject-matter of them is not poetical. The finest part of them are illustrations or personifications

of dry abstract ideas ;<sup>1</sup> and the union between the idea and the illustration is not of that perfect and pleasing kind as to constitute poetry, or indeed to be admissible, but for the effect intended to be produced by it ; that is, by every means in our power to give animation and attraction to subjects in themselves barren of ornament, but which at the same time are pregnant with the most important consequences, and in which the understanding and the passions are equally interested.

- 10 I have heard it remarked by a person, to whose opinion I would sooner submit than to a general council of critics, that the sound of Burke's prose is not musical ; that it wants cadence ; and that instead of being so lavish of his imagery as is generally supposed, he seemed to him to be rather parsimonious in the use of it, always expanding and making the most of his ideas. This may be true if we compare him with some of our poets, or perhaps with some of our early prose writers, but not if we compare him with any of our political writers or parliamentary speakers.
- 20 There are some very fine things of Lord Bolingbroke's on the same subjects, but not equal to Burke's. As for Junius, he is at the head of his class ; but that class is not the highest. He has been said to have more dignity than Burke. Yes—if the stalk of a giant is less dignified than the strut of a *petit-mâitre*. I do not mean to speak disrespectfully of Junius, but grandeur is not the character of his composition ; and if it is not to be found in Burke it is to be found nowhere.

<sup>1</sup> As in the comparison of the British Constitution to the 'proud keep of Windsor', &c., the most splendid passage in his works.

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*ON THE GROUNDS OF GOVERNMENT*

(Published in *The Friend*, October 12, 1809.)

I do not mean, that this great man supported different principles at different eras of his political life. On the contrary, no man was ever more like himself. From his first published speech on the American colonies to his last posthumous tracts, we see the same man, the same doctrines, the same uniform wisdom of practical counsels, the same reasoning, and the same prejudices against all abstract grounds, against all deduction of practice from theory. The inconsistency to which I allude, is of a different kind: it is the want of congruity in the principles 10 appealed to in different parts of the same work, it is an apparent versatility of the principle with the occasion. If his opponents are theorists, then everything is to be founded on prudence, on mere calculations of expediency; and every man is represented as acting according to the state of his own immediate self-interest. Are his opponents calculators? Then calculation itself is represented as a sort of crime. God has given us feelings, and we are to obey them; and the most absurd prejudices become venerable, to which these feelings have given consecration. 20 I have not forgotten that Burke himself defended these half contradictions, on the pretext of balancing the too much on the one side by a too much on the other. But never can I believe, but that the straight line must needs be the nearest; and that where there is the most, and the most unalloyed truth, there will be the greatest and most permanent power of persuasion. But the fact was, that Burke in his public character found himself, as it were, in a Noah's ark, with a very few men and a great many beasts. He felt how much his immediate power was 30

lessened by the very circumstance of his measureless superiority to those about him: he acted, therefore, under a perpetual system of compromise—a compromise of greatness with meanness; a compromise of comprehension with narrowness; a compromise of the philosopher (who armed with the twofold knowledge of history and the laws of spirit looked, as with a telescope, far around and into the far distance) with the mere men of business, or with yet coarser intellects, who handled a truth, which they  
10 were required to receive, as they would handle an ox, which they were desired to purchase. But why need I repeat what has been already said in so happy a manner by Goldsmith, of this great man:

Who, born for the universe, narrowed his mind,  
And to party gave up what was meant for mankind;  
Though fraught with all learning, yet straining his throat  
To persuade Tommy Townshend to give him a vote;  
Who, too deep for his hearers, still went on refining,  
And thought of convincing, while they thought of dining!

20 And if in consequence it was his fate to 'cut blocks with a razor', I may be permitted to add, that, in respect of truth though not of genius, the weapon was injured by the misapplication.

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From THOMAS MOORE'S  
*MEMOIRS OF SHERIDAN*

(Published 1825.)

THE consequence, as is well known, of the new course taken by Burke was that the speeches, and writings which he henceforward produced, and in which, as usual, his judgement was run away with by his temper, form a com-

plete contrast, in spirit and tendency, to all that he had put on record in the former part of his life. He has thus left behind him two separate and distinct armouries of opinion, from which both Whig and Tory may furnish themselves with weapons, the most splendid, if not the most highly tempered, that ever Genius and Eloquence condescended to bequeath to Party. He has thus, too, by his own personal versatility attained in the world of politics what Shakespeare, by the versatility of his characters, achieved for the world in general,—namely, such a universality of application to all opinions and purposes, that it would be difficult for any statesman of any party to find himself placed in any situation for which he could not select some golden sentence from Burke, either to strengthen his position by reasoning, or illustrate and adorn it by fancy. While, therefore, our respect for the man himself is diminished by this want of moral identity observable through his life and writings, we are but the more disposed to admire the unrivalled genius which could thus throw itself out in so many various directions with equal splendour and vigour. In general political deserters lose their value and power in the very act, and bring little more than their treason to the new cause which they espouse:

Fortis in armis  
Caesareis Labienus erat ; nunc transfuga vilis.

But Burke was mighty in either camp ; and it would have taken two great men to effect what he, by this division of himself, achieved. His mind, indeed, lies parted asunder in his works, like some vast continent severed by a convulsion in nature,—each portion peopled by its own giant race of opinions, differing altogether in features and language, and committed in eternal hostility with each other.

From D E Q U I N C E Y ' S Essay on  
*R H E T O R I C*

(First published in *Blackwood's Magazine*, December 1828.)

ALL hail to Edmund Burke, the supreme writer of his century, the man of the largest and finest understanding! Upon that word, *understanding*, we lay a stress: for oh! ye immortal donkeys, who have written 'about him' and 'about him', with what an obstinate stupidity have ye brayed away for one third of a century about that which ye are pleased to call his 'fancy'. Fancy in your throats, ye miserable twaddlers! as if Edmund Burke were the man to play with his fancy, for the purpose of separable ornament. He was a man of fancy in no other sense than as Lord Bacon was so, and Jeremy Taylor, and as all large and discursive thinkers are and must be: that is to say, the fancy which he had in common with all mankind, and very probably in no eminent degree, in him was urged into unusual activity under the necessities of his capacious understanding. His great and peculiar distinction was that he viewed all objects of the understanding under more relations than other men, and under more complex relations. According to the multiplicity of these relations, 20 a man is said to have a *large* understanding; according to their subtlety, a *fine* one; and in an angelic understanding, all things would appear to be related to all. Now, to apprehend and detect more relations, or to pursue them steadily, is a process absolutely impossible without the intervention of physical analogies. To say, therefore, that a man is a great thinker, or a fine thinker, is but another expression for saying that he has a *schematizing* (or, to use a plainer but less accurate expression, a *figurative*) understanding. In that sense, and for that purpose, 30 Burke is figurative: but understood, as he has been under-

stood by the long-eared race of his critics, not as thinking in and by his figures, but as deliberately laying them on by way of enamel or after-ornament,—not as *incarnating*, but simply as *dressing* his thoughts in imagery,—so understood, he is not the Burke of reality, but a poor fictitious Burke, modelled after the poverty of conception which belongs to his critics.

It is true, however, that in some rare cases Burke *did* indulge himself in a pure rhetorician's use of fancy; consciously and profusely lavishing his ornaments for mere 10 purposes of effect. Such a case occurs for instance in that admirable picture of the degradation of Europe, where he represents the different crowned heads as bidding against each other at Basle for the favour and countenance of Regicide. Others of the same kind there are in his ever memorable letter on the Duke of Bedford's attack upon him in the House of Lords: and one of these we shall here cite, disregarding its greater chance for being already familiar to the reader, upon two considerations; first, that it has all the appearance of being finished with the 20 most studied regard to effect; and secondly, for an interesting anecdote connected with it which we have never seen in print, but for which we have better authority than could be produced perhaps for most of those which are. The anecdote is, that Burke conversing with Dr. Lawrence and another gentleman on the *literary* value of his own writings, declared that the particular passage in the entire range of his works which had cost him the most labour, and upon which, as tried by a certain canon of his own, his labour seemed to himself to have been the most 30 successful, was the following:

[De Quincey proceeds partly to summarize, and partly to quote a passage from *A Letter to a Noble Lord*; see p. 175, beginning: ‘The Crown has considered me . . . , to p. 176, ‘imperiumque pater Romanus habebit.’]

- This was the sounding passage which Burke alleged as the *chef-d'œuvre* of his rhetoric ; and the argument upon which he justified his choice is specious if not convincing. He laid it down as a maxim of composition, that every passage in a rhetorical performance which was brought forward prominently, and relied upon as a *key* (to use the language of war) in sustaining the main position of the writer, ought to involve a thought, an image, and a sentiment ; and such a synthesis he found in the passage  
10 which we have quoted. This criticism, over and above the pleasure which it always gives to hear a great man's opinion of himself, is valuable as showing that Burke, because negligent of trivial inaccuracies, was not at all the less anxious about the larger proprieties and decorums (for this passage, confessedly so laboured, has several instances of slovenliness in trifles) ; and that in the midst of his apparent hurry he carried out a jealous vigilance upon what he wrote, and the eye of a person practised in artificial effects. . . .
- 20 We are petrified to find him described by Dr. Whately as a writer ' qui variare cupit rem prodigaliter umam ', and as on that account offensive to good taste. The understanding of Burke was even morbidly impatient of tautology ; progress and motion, everlasting motion, was a mere necessity of his intellect. We will venture to offer a king's ransom for one unequivocal case of tautology from the whole circle of Burke's writings. The *principium indiscernibilium*, upon which Leibnitz affirmed the impossibility of finding any two leaves of a tree  
30 that should be mere duplicates of each other in what we might call the *palmistry* of their natural markings, may be applied to Burke as safely as to nature ; no two propositions, we are satisfied, can be found in *him*, which do not contain a larger variety than is requisite to their sharp discrimination. . . .

The rhetorical manner is supported in the French writers chiefly by an abundance of *ohs* and *ahs*; by interrogatories, apostrophes, and startling exclamations; all which are mere mechanical devices for raising the style; but in the substance of the composition, apart from its dress, there is nothing properly rhetorical. The leading thoughts in all pulpit eloquence being derived from religion, and in fact the common inheritance of human nature, if they cannot be novel, for that very reason cannot be undignified; but for the same reason they are apt to become unaffected and trite unless varied and individualized by new infusions of thought and feeling. The smooth monotony of the leading religious topics, as managed by the French orators, receives under the treatment of Jeremy Taylor at each turn of the sentence a new flexure, or what may be called a separate *articulation*;<sup>1</sup> old thoughts are surveyed from novel stations and under various angles; and a field absolutely exhausted throws up eternally fresh verdure under the fructifying lava of burning imagery. *Human life*, for example, is short; *human happiness* is frail; how trite, 20

<sup>1</sup> We may take the opportunity of noticing what it is that constitutes the peculiar and characterizing circumstance in Burke's manner of composition. It is this; that under his treatment every truth, be it what it may, every thesis of a sentence, *grows* in the very act of unfolding it. Take any sentence you please from Dr. Johnson, suppose, and it will be found to contain a thought, good or bad, fully preconceived. Whereas in Burke, whatever may have been the preconception, it receives a new determination or inflexion at every clause of the sentence. Some collateral adjunct of the main proposition, some temperament or restraint, some oblique glance at its remote affinities, will invariably be found to attend the progress of his sentences, like the spray from a waterfall, or the scintillations from the iron under the blacksmith's hammer. Hence whilst a writer of Dr. Johnson's class seems only to look back upon his thoughts, Burke looks forward, and does in fact advance and change his own station concurrently with the advance of the sentences. This peculiarity is no doubt in some degree due to the habit of extempore speaking, but not to that only.

how obvious a thesis! Yet in the beginning of the *Holy Dying*, upon that simplest of themes how magnificent a descent! Variations the most original upon a ground the most universal, and a sense of novelty diffused over truths coeval with human life! Finally, it may be remarked of the imagery in the French rhetoric that it is thinly sown, commonplace, deficient in splendour, and above all merely ornamental; that is to say, it does no more than echo and repeat what is already said in the thought which it  
is brought to illustrate; whereas in Jeremy Taylor and in Burke, it will be found usually to extend and amplify the thought, or to fortify it by some indirect argument of its truth. Thus for instance in the passage above quoted from Taylor, upon the insensibility of man to the continual mercies of God, at first view the mind is staggered by the apparent impossibility that so infinite a reality, and of so continual a recurrence, should escape our notice; but the illustrative image, drawn from the case of a man standing at the bottom of the ocean, and yet insensible  
to that world of waters above him, from the uniformity and equality of its pressure, flashes upon us with a sense of something equally marvellous in a case which we know to be a physical fact. We are thus reconciled to the proposition by the same image which illustrates it.

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From MACAULAY'S Essay  
ON SOUTHEY'S COLLOQUIES ON  
SOCIETY

(First published in the *Edinburgh Review*, January 1830.)

MR. BURKE assuredly possessed an understanding admirably fitted for the investigation of truth, an understanding stronger than that of any statesman, active or speculative, of the eighteenth century, stronger than

everything, except his own fierce and ungovernable sensibility. Hence he generally chose his side like a fanatic, and defended it like a philosopher. His conduct on the most important occasions of his life, at the time of the impeachment of Hastings for example, and at the time of the French Revolution, seems to have been prompted by those feelings and motives which Mr. Coleridge has so happily described,

Stormy pity, and the cherish'd lure  
Of pomp, and proud precipitance of soul.

10

Hindostan, with its vast cities, its gorgeous pagodas, its infinite swarms of dusky population, its long-descended dynasties, its stately etiquette, excited in a mind so capacious, so imaginative, and so susceptible, the most intense interest. The peculiarities of the costume, of the manners, and of the laws, the very mystery which hung over the language and origin of the people, seized his imagination. To plead under the ancient arches of Westminster Hall, in the name of the English people, at the bar of the English nobles, for great nations and kings separated 20 from him by half the world, seemed to him the height of human glory. Again, it is not difficult to perceive that his hostility to the French Revolution principally arose from the vexation which he felt at having all his old political associations disturbed, at seeing the well-known landmarks of states obliterated, and the names and distinctions with which the history of Europe had been filled for ages at once swept away. He felt like an antiquary whose shield had been scoured, or a connoisseur who found his Titian retouched. But, however he came by an opinion, 30 he had no sooner got it than he did his best to make out a legitimate title to it. His reason, like a spirit in the service of an enchanter, though spell-bound, was still mighty. It did whatever work his passions and his imagination might impose. But it did that work, how-

ever arduous, with marvellous dexterity and vigour. His course was not determined by argument; but he could defend the wildest course by arguments more plausible than those by which common men support opinions which they have adopted after the fullest deliberation. Reason has scarcely ever displayed, even in those well constituted minds of which she occupies the throne, so much power and energy as in the lowest offices of that imperial servitude.

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From MACAULAY'S Essay  
ON BACON

(First published in the *Edinburgh Review*, July 1837.)

- 10 ONE of the most remarkable circumstances in the history of Bacon's mind is the order in which its powers expanded themselves. With him the fruit came first and remained till the last; the blossoms did not appear till late. In general, the development of the fancy is to the development of the judgement what the growth of a girl is to the growth of a boy. The fancy attains at an earlier period to the perfection of its beauty, its power, and its fruitfulness; and as it is first to ripen, it is also first to fade. It has generally lost something of its bloom and freshness before  
20 the sterner faculties have reached maturity; and is commonly withered and barren while those faculties still retain all their energy. It rarely happens that the fancy and the judgement grow together. It happens still more rarely that the judgement grows faster than the fancy. This seems, however, to have been the case with Bacon. His boyhood and youth appear to have been singularly sedate. His gigantic scheme of philosophical reform is said by some writers to have been planned before he was fifteen, and

was undoubtedly planned while he was still young. He observed as vigilantly, meditated as deeply, and judged as temperately when he gave his first work to the world as at the close of his long career. But in eloquence, in sweetness and variety of expression, and in richness of illustration, his later writings are far superior to those of his youth. In this respect the history of his mind bears some resemblance to the history of the mind of Burke. The treatise on the Sublime and Beautiful, though written on a subject which the coldest metaphysician could hardly 10 treat without being occasionally betrayed into florid writing, is the most unadorned of all Burke's works. It appeared when he was twenty-five or twenty-six. When, at forty, he wrote the Thoughts on the Causes of the existing Discontents, his reason and his judgement had reached their full maturity; but his eloquence was still in its splendid dawn. At fifty, his rhetoric was quite as rich as good taste would permit; and when he died, at almost seventy, it had become ungracefully gorgeous. In his youth he wrote on the emotions produced by mountains and cascades, 20 by the master-pieces of painting and sculpture, by the faces and necks of beautiful women, in the style of a parliamentary report. In his old age, he discussed treatises and tariffs in the most fervid and brilliant language of romance. It is strange that the Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful, and the Letter to a Noble Lord, should be the productions of one man. But it is far more strange that the Essay should have been a production of his youth, and the Letter of his old age.

From MATTHEW ARNOLD'S Essay on

*THE FUNCTION OF CRITICISM*

(First published in the *National Review*, November 1864.)

AT first sight it seems strange that out of the immense stir of the French Revolution and its age should not have come a crop of works of genius equal to that which came out of the stir of the great productive time of Greece, or out of that of the Renaissance, with its powerful episode the Reformation. But the truth is that the stir of the French Revolution took a character which essentially distinguished it from such movements as these. These were, in the main, disinterestedly intellectual and spiritual movements ; movements in which the human spirit looked for its satisfaction in itself and in the increased play of its own activity. The French Revolution took a political, practical character. The movement which went on in France under the old régime, from 1700 to 1789, was far more really akin than that of the Revolution itself to the movement of the Renaissance ; the France of Voltaire and Rousseau told far more powerfully upon the mind of Europe than the France of the Revolution. Goethe reproached this last expressly with having 'thrown quiet culture back'. Nay, and the true key to how much in our Byron, even in our Wordsworth, is this !—that they had their source in a great movement of feeling, not in a great movement of mind. The French Revolution, however,—that object of so much blind love and so much blind hatred,—found undoubtedly its motive-power in the intelligence of men and not in their practical sense ;—this is what distinguishes it from the English Revolution of Charles the First's time. This is what makes it a more spiritual event than our Revolution, an event of much more powerful and world-wide interest, though practically less

successful ;—it appeals to an order of ideas which are universal, certain, permanent. 1789 asked of a thing, Is it rational ? 1642 asked of a thing, Is it legal ? or, when it went furthest, Is it according to conscience ? This is the English fashion ; a fashion to be treated, within its own sphere, with the highest respect ; for its success, within its own sphere, has been prodigious. But what is law in one place, is not law in another ; what is law here to-day, is not law even here to-morrow ; and as for conscience, what is binding on one man's conscience is not binding <sup>to</sup> on another's. The old woman who threw her stool at the head of the surplice minister in St. Giles's Church at Edinburgh obeyed an impulse to which millions of the human race may be permitted to remain strangers. But the prescriptions of reason are absolute, unchanging, of universal validity ; *to count by tens is the easiest way of counting*,—that is a proposition of which every one, from here to the Antipodes, feels the force ; at least, I should say so, if we did not live in a country where it is not impossible that any morning we may find a letter in *The Times* declaring that a decimal coinage is an absurdity. That a whole nation should have been penetrated with an enthusiasm for pure reason, and with an ardent zeal for making its prescriptions triumph, is a very remarkable thing, when we consider how little of mind, or anything so worthy and quickening as mind, comes into the motives which alone, in general, impel great masses of men. In spite of the extravagant directions given to this enthusiasm, in spite of the crimes and follies in which it lost itself, the French Revolution derives from the force, truth, and <sup>30</sup> universality of the ideas which it took for its law, and from the passion with which it could inspire a multitude for these ideas, a unique and still living power ; it is—it will probably long remain—the greatest, the most animating event in history. And, as no sincere passion for the things

of the mind, even though it turn out in many respects an unfortunate passion, is ever quite thrown away and quite barren of good, France has reaped from hers one fruit, the natural and legitimate fruit, though not precisely the grand fruit she expected ; she is the country in Europe where *the people* is most alive.

But the mania for giving an immediate political and practical application to all these fine ideas of the reason was fatal. Here an Englishman is in his element : on this theme we can all go on for hours. And all we are in the habit of saying on it has undoubtedly a great deal of truth. Ideas cannot be too much prized in and for themselves, cannot be too much lived with ; but to transport them abruptly into the world of politics and practice, violently to revolutionize this world to their bidding,—that is quite another thing. There is the world of ideas and there is the world of practice ; the French are often for suppressing the one and the English the other ; but neither is to be suppressed. A member of the House of Commons said to me the other day : ‘That a thing is an anomaly, I consider to be no objection to it whatever.’ I venture to think he was wrong ; that a thing is an anomaly *is* an objection to it, but absolutely and in the sphere of ideas : it is not necessarily, under such and such circumstances, or at such and such a moment, an objection to it in the sphere of politics and practice. Joubert has said beautifully : ‘*C'est la force et le droit qui règlent toutes choses dans le monde ; la force en attendant le droit.*’ (Force and right are the governors of this world ; force till right is ready.) *Force till right is ready* ; and till right is ready, force, the existing order of things, is justified, is the legitimate ruler. But right is something moral, and implies inward recognition, free assent of the will ; we are not ready for right,—right, so far as we are concerned, *is not ready*,—until we have attained this sense of seeing it and willing it. The way

in which for us it may change and transform force, the existing order of things, and become, in its turn, the legitimate ruler of the world, will depend on the way in which, when our time comes, we see it and will it. Therefore for other people, enamoured of their own newly discerned right, to attempt to impose it upon us as ours, and violently to substitute their right for our force, is an act of tyranny, and to be resisted. It sets at nought the second great half of our maxim, *force till right is ready.* This was the grand error of the French Revolution ; and 10 its movement of ideas, by quitting the intellectual sphere and rushing furiously into the political sphere, ran, indeed, a prodigious and memorable course, but produced no such intellectual fruit as the movement of ideas of the Renaissance, and created, in opposition to itself, what I may call an *epoch of concentration.* The great force of that epoch of concentration was England ; and the great voice of that epoch of concentration was Burke. It is the fashion to treat Burke's writings on the French Revolution as superannuated and conquered by the event ; as the eloquent 20 but unphilosophical tirades of bigotry and prejudice. I will not deny that they are often disfigured by the violence and passion of the moment, and that in some directions Burke's view was bounded, and his observation therefore at fault ; but on the whole, and for those who can make the needful corrections, what distinguishes these writings is their profound, permanent, fruitful, philosophical truth ; they contain the true philosophy of an epoch of concentration, dissipate the heavy atmosphere which its own nature is apt to engender round it, and make its 30 resistance rational instead of mechanical.

But Burke is so great because, almost alone in England, he brings thought to bear upon politics, he saturates politics with thought. It is his accident that his ideas were at the service of an epoch of concentration, not of

an epoch of expansion ; it is his characteristic that he so lived by ideas, and had such a source of them welling up within him, that he could float even an epoch of concentration and English Tory politics with them. It does not hurt him that Dr. Price and the Liberals were enraged with him ; it does not even hurt him that George the Third and the Tories were enchanted with him. His greatness is that he lived in a world which neither English Liberalism nor English Toryism is apt to enter ;— the world of ideas, not the world of catchwords and party habits. So far is it from being really true of him that he 'to party gave up what was meant for mankind', that at the very end of his fierce struggle with the French Revolution, after all his invectives against its false pretensions, hollowness, and madness, with his sincere conviction of its mischievousness, he can close a memorandum on the best means of combating it, some of the last pages he ever wrote,— the *Thoughts on French Affairs*, in December 1791, — with these striking words.

[Here Arnold quotes the passage given on p. 159, under *The Indecipherable in the Revolution.*]

- 20 That return of Burke upon himself has always seemed to me one of the finest things in English literature, or indeed in any literature. That is what I call living by ideas ; when one side of a question has long had your earnest support, when all your feelings are engaged, when you hear all round you no language but one, when your party talks this language like a steam-engine and can imagine no other,—still to be able to think, still to be irresistibly carried, if so it be, by the current of thought to the opposite side of the question, and, like Balaam, to 30 be unable to speak anything *but what the Lord has put in your mouth.* I know nothing more striking, and I must add that I know nothing more un-English.

## PERSONAL ESTIMATES

*By Johnson*(From Boswell's *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*; published 1785.)  
i

WE talked of Mr. Burke—Dr. Johnson said, he had great variety of knowledge, store of imagery, copiousness of language. ROBERTSON. ‘He has wit too.’ JOHNSON. ‘No, sir; he never succeeds there; ’tis low, ’tis conceit. I used to say Burke never once made a good joke. What I most envy Burke for is his being constantly the same. He is never what we call hum-drum; never unwilling to begin to talk, nor in haste to leave off. . . . Burke, sir, is such a man that if you met him for the first time in the street where you were stopped by a drove of oxen, and you <sup>10</sup> and he stepped aside to take shelter but for five minutes, he’d talk to you in such a manner that, when you parted, you would say, this is an extraordinary man.’ (August 15, 1773.)

ii

I OBSERVED that the character of Nicholson in this book [Sir George Mackenzie’s *Characteres Advocatorum*] resembled that of Burke: for it is said in one place, *in omnes lusus et iocos se saepe resolvebat*; and in another, *sed accepitris more e conspectu aliquando astantium sublimi se protrahens volatu, in praedam miro impetu descendebat*. JOHNSON. ‘No, <sup>20</sup> sir; I never heard Burke make a good joke in my life.’ Dr. BOSWELL. ‘But, sir, you will allow he is a hawk.’ Dr. Johnson, thinking that I meant this of his joking, said, ‘No, sir, he is not the hawk there. He is the beetle in the mire.’ I still adhered to my metaphor,—‘But he soars as the hawk’. JOHNSON. ‘Yes, sir; but he catches nothing.’ McLEOD asked, what is the particular excellence of Burke’s eloquence? JOHNSON. ‘Copiousness and fertility of allu-

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sion ; a power of diversifying his matter by placing it in various relations. Burke has great information and great command of language ; though, in my opinion, it has not in every respect the highest elegance.' BOSWELL. 'Do you think, sir, that Burke has read Cicero much ?' JOHNSON. 'I don't believe it, sir. Burke has great knowledge, great fluency of words, and great promptness of ideas, so that he can speak with great illustration on any subject that comes before him. He is neither like Cicero, nor like <sup>10</sup> Demosthenes, nor like any one else, but speaks as well as he can.' (September 15, 1773.)

*By Goldsmith*

(From *Retaliation*, written in March 1774.)

HERE lies our good Edmund, whose genius was such,  
We scarcely can praise it or blame it too much ;  
Who, born for the universe, narrowed his mind,  
And to party gave up what was meant for mankind ;  
Though fraught with all learning, yet straining his throat  
To persuade Tommy Townshend to give him a vote ;  
Who, too deep for his hearers, still went on refining,  
And thought of convincing, while they thought of dining ;  
<sup>20</sup> Though equal to all things, for all things unfit ;  
Too nice for a statesman, too proud for a wit,  
For a patot too cool, for a drudge disobedient,  
And to fond of the *right* to pursue the *expedient*.  
In short, was his fate, unemployed or in place, Sir,  
To eat mutton cold, and cut blocks with a razor.

(From Boswell's *Life of Johnson* ; published 1791.)

No wonder he [Goldsmith] patiently allow me to enlarge on Johnson's wonderful abilities ; but exclaimed, ' Is he like a snake, who winds into a subject like a serpent ? ' (March 1773.)

*By Wordsworth*

(From *The Prelude* (vii. 486 f.) ; written 1799-1805 ; published 1850.)

PASS we . . .

. . . to that great stage  
Where senators, tongue-favoured men, perform,  
Admired and envied. Oh ! the beating heart,  
When one among the prime of these rose up,—  
One of whose name from childhood we had heard  
Familiarly, a household term, like those,  
The Bedfords, Glosters, Salisburys, of old  
Whom the fifth Harry talks of. Silence ! hush !  
This is no trifler, no short-flighted wit,  
No stammerer of a minute, painfully  
Delivered. No ! the Orator hath yoked  
The hours, like young Aurora, to his car :  
Thrice welcome Presence ! how can patience ere  
Grow weary of attending on a track  
That kindles with such glory ! All are charmed,  
Astonished ; like a hero in romance  
He winds away his never-ending horn ;  
Words follow words, sense seems to follow sense :  
What memory and what logic ! till the strain,  
Transcendent, superhuman as it seemed,  
Grows tedious even in a young man's ear.

10

20

Genius of Burke ! forgive the pen reduced  
By specious wonders, and too slow to tell  
Of what the ingenuous, what bewildered men,  
Beginning to mistrust their boastful guides,  
And wise men, willing to grow wiser, caught,  
Rapt auditors ! from thy most eloquent tongue—  
Now mute, for ever mute in the cold grave.

I see him,—old, but vigorous in age,—  
Stand like an oak whose stag-horn branches start  
Out of its leafy brow, the more to awe  
The younger brethren of the grove. But some—  
While he forewarns, denounces, launches forth,  
Against all systems built on abstract rights,  
Keen ridicule ; the majesty proclaims  
Of Institutes and Laws, hallowed by time ;  
Declares the vital power of social ties  
10 Endeared by custom ; and with high disdain,  
Exploding against Theory, insists  
Upon the allegiance to which men are born—  
Some—say at once a froward multitude—  
Murmur (for truth is hated, where not loved)  
As the winds fret within the Aeolian cave,  
Galled by their monarch's chain. The times were big  
With ominous change, which, night by night, provoked  
Keen struggles, and black clouds of passion raised ;  
But memorable moments intervened,  
20 When Wisdom, like the Goddess from Jove's brain,  
Broke forth in armour of resplendent words,  
Startling the Synod. Could a youth, and one  
In ancient story versed, whose breast had heaved  
Under the weight of classic eloquence,  
Sit, see, and hear, unthankful, uninspired ?

Selections from  
BURKE

perpetually confined in the close vapour of these malignant minerals. An hundred thousand more at least are tortured without remission by the suffocating smoke, intense fires, and constant drudgery necessary in refining and managing the products of those mines. If any man informed us that two hundred thousand innocent persons were condemned to so intolerable slavery, how should we pity the unhappy sufferers, and how great would be our just indignation against those who inflicted so cruel and ignominious a punishment ! This is an instance, I could not wish to a stronger, of the numberless things which we pass by in their common dress, yet which shock us when they are nakedly represented. But this number, considerable as it is, and the slavery, with all its baseness and horror, which we have at home, is nothing to what the rest of the world affords of the same nature. Millions daily bathed in the poisonous damps and destructive effluvia of lead, silver, copper, and arsenic. To say nothing of those other employments, those stations of wretchedness and contempt, in which civil society has placed the numerous *enfans perdus*<sup>20</sup> of her army. Would any rational man submit to one of the most tolerable of these drudgeries for all the artificial enjoyments which policy has made to result from them ? By no means. And yet need I suggest to your Lordship that those who find the means, and those who arrive at the end are not at all the same persons. On considering the strange and unaccountable fancies and contrivances of artificial reason, I have somewhere called this earth the Bedlam of our system. Looking now upon the effects of some of those fancies, may we not with equal reason call it likewise the Newgate and the Bridewell of the universe ? Indeed the blindness of one part of mankind, co-operating with the phrensy and villainy of the other, has been the real builder of this respectable fabric of political society : and as the blindness of mankind has caused their slavery,

42 EARLY PHILOSOPHICAL TREATISES

in return their state of slavery is made a pretence for continuing them in a state of blindness ; for the politician will tell you gravely that their life of servitude disqualifies the greater part of the race of man for a search of truth and supplies them with no other than mean and insufficient ideas. 'This is but too true ; and this is one of the reasons for which I blame such institutions.

*Difference of the Sublime and Beautiful*

(From *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* ; published 1756.)

ON closing this general view of beauty, it naturally occurs that we should compare it with the sublime ; and in this comparison there appears a remarkable contrast. For sublime objects are vast in their dimensions, beautiful ones comparatively small : beauty should be smooth and polished ; the great, rugged and negligent : beauty should shun the right line, yet deviate from it insensibly ; the great in many cases loves the right line, and when it deviates it often makes a strong deviation : beauty should not be obscure ; the great ought to be dark and gloomy : beauty should be light and delicate ; the great ought to be solid, and even massive. They are indeed ideas of a very different nature, one being founded on pain, the other on pleasure ; and however they may vary afterwards from the direct nature of their causes, yet these causes keep up an eternal distinction between them, a distinction never to be forgotten by any whose business it is to affect the passions. In the infinite variety of natural combinations, we must expect to find the qualities of things the most remote imaginable from each other united in the same object. We must expect also to find combinations of the same kind in the works of art. But when we consider the power of an object upon our passions, we must know that when anything is intended to affect the mind by the

force of some predominant property, the affection produced is like to be the more uniform and perfect if all the other properties or qualities of the object be of the same nature, and tending to the same design, as the principal.

If black and white blend, soften, and unite

A thousand ways, are there no black and white ?

If the qualities of the sublime and beautiful are sometimes found united, does this prove that they are the same ; does it prove that they are any way allied ; does it prove even that they are not opposite and contradictory ? 10  
Black and white may soften, may blend ; but they are not therefore the same. Nor, when they are so softened and blended with each other, or with different colours, is the power of black as black, or of white as white, so strong as when each stands uniform and distinguished.

*The Proper Effect of Poetry not Pictorial*

(From the same.)

So little does poetry depend for its effect on the power of raising sensible images that I am convinced it would lose a very considerable part of its energy if this were the necessary result of all description. Because that union of affecting words, which is the most powerful of all 20 poetical instruments, would frequently lose its force, along with its propriety and consistency, if the sensible images were always excited. There is not perhaps in the whole Aeneid a more grand and laboured passage than the description of Vulcan's cavern in Etna, and the works that are there carried on. Virgil dwells particularly on the formation of the thunder, which he describes unfinished under the hammers of the Cyclops. But what are the principles of this extraordinary composition ?

*Tres imbris torti radios, tres nubis aquosae  
Addiderant : rutili tres ignis, et alii austri :  
Fulgores nunc terrificos, sonitumque, metumque  
Miscebant operi, flammisque sequacibus iras.*

## 44 EARLY PHILOSOPHICAL TREATISE

This seems to me admirably sublime ; yet if we attend coolly to the kind of sensible images which a combination of ideas of this sort must form, the chimeras of madmen cannot appear more wild and absurd than such a picture ‘*Three rays of twisted showers, three of watery clouds, three of fire, and three of the winged south wind : then mixed they in the work terrific lightnings, and sound, and fear, an anger, with pursuing flames.*’ This strange composition is formed into a gross body ; it is hammered by the Cyclops so it is in part polished, and partly continues rough. The truth is, if poetry gives us a noble assemblage of words corresponding to many noble ideas which are connected by circumstances of time or place, or related to each other as cause and effect, or associated in any natural way they may be moulded together in any form, and perfectly answer their end. The picturesque connexion is no demanded ; because no real picture is formed ; nor is the effect of the description at all the less upon this account [What is said of Helen by Priam and the old men of his council, is generally thought to give us the highest possible idea of that fatal beauty.

Οὐ νέμεσις Τρῶας καὶ ἔκνημιδας Ἀχαιοὺς  
Τοιῷδ' ἀμφὶ γυναικὶ πολὺν χρόνον ἀλγει πάτερει.  
Αἰνῶς δ' ἀθανάτησι θεῖς εἰς ὅπα ἔπειν.

They cried, No wonder such celestial charms  
For nine long years have set the world in arms ;  
What winning graces ! what majestic mien !  
She moves a goddess, and she looks a queen. POPE

Here is not one word said of the particulars of her beauty,  
nothing which can in the least help us to any precise idea  
of her person ; but yet we are much more touched by  
this manner of mentioning her than by those long and  
laboured descriptions of Helen, whether handed down by  
tradition, or formed by fancy, which are to be met with  
in some authors. I am sure it affects me much more than

## EARLY PHILOSOPHICAL TREATISES 45

the minute description which Spenser has given of Belphebe ; though I own that there are parts in that description, as there are in all the descriptions of that excellent writer, extremely fine and poetical. The terrible picture which Lucretius has drawn of religion, in order to display the magnanimity of his philosophical hero in opposing her, is thought to be designed with great boldness and spirit.

10

*Humana ante oculos foedè cum vita iaceret,  
In terris, oppressa gravi sub religione,  
Quæ caput e cœli regionibus ostendebat  
Horribili super aspectu mortalibus instans,  
Primus Graius homo mortales tollere contra  
Est oculos ait sus.—*

What idea do you derive from so excellent a picture ? None at all, most certainly : neither has the poet said a single word which might in the least serve to mark a single limb or feature of the phantom, which he intended to represent in all the horrors imagination can conceive. In reality, poetry and rhetoric do not succeed in exact description so well as painting does ; their business is to affect rather by sympathy than imitation ; to display rather the effect of things on the mind of the speaker, or of others, than to present a clear idea of the things themselves. This is their most extensive province, and that in which they succeed the best.

## HOME AFFAIRS

### *Government and the Temper of the People*

(From *Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents*, 1770.)

IN cases of tumult and disorder our law has invested every man, in some sort, with the authority of a magistrate. When the affairs of the nation are distracted,

private people are, by the spirit of that law, justified in stepping a little out of their ordinary sphere. They enjoy a privilege of somewhat more dignity and effect than that of idle lamentation over the calamities of their country. They may look into them narrowly ; they may reason upon them liberally ; and if they should be so fortunate as to discover the true source of the mischief, and to suggest any probable method of removing it, though they may displease the rulers for the day, they are certainly of service to the cause of government. Government is deeply interested in every thing which, even through the medium of some temporary uneasiness, may tend finally to compose the minds of the subject and to conciliate their affections. I have nothing to do here with the abstract value of the voice of the people. But as long as reputation, the most precious possession of every individual, and as long as opinion, the great support of the state, depend entirely upon that voice, it can never be considered as a thing of little consequence either to individuals or to governments. Nations are not primarily ruled by laws ; less by violence. Whatever original energy may be supposed either in force or regulation, the operation of both is, in truth, merely instrumental. Nations are governed by the same methods, and on the same principles, by which an individual without authority is often able to govern those who are his equals or his superiors ; by a knowledge of their temper, and by a judicious management of it. . . .

Nobody, I believe, will consider it merely as the language of spleen or disappointment if I say that there is something particularly alarming in the present conjuncture. There is hardly a man, in or out of power, who holds any other language. That government is at once dreaded and contemned ; that the laws are despoiled of all their respected and salutary terrors ; that their inaction

is a subject of ridicule, and their exertion of abhorrence ; that rank, and office, and title, and all the solemn plausibilities of the world, have lost their reverence and effect ; that our foreign politics are as much deranged as our domestic economy ; that our dependencies are slackened in their affection, and loosened from their obedience ; that we know neither how to yield nor how to enforce ; that hardly anything above or below, abroad or at home, is sound and entire ; but that disconnection and confusion, in offices, in parties, in families, in parliament, in the nation, prevail beyond the disorders of any former time : these are facts universally admitted and lamented. . . .

I am not one of those who think that the people are never in the wrong. They have been so, frequently and outrageously, both in other countries and in this. But I do say that in all disputes between them and their rulers the presumption is at least upon a par in favour of the people. Experience may perhaps justify me in going farther. When popular discontents have been very prevalent, it may well be affirmed and supported that there has been generally something found amiss in the constitution, or in the conduct of government. The people have no interest in disorder. When they do wrong, it is their error, and not their crime. But with the governing part of the state it is far otherwise. They certainly may act ill by design, as well as by mistake. '*Les révoltes qui arrivent dans les grands états ne sont point un effet du hasard, ni du caprice des peuples. Rien ne révolte les grands d'un royaume comme un gouvernement foible et dérangé. Pour la populace, ce n'est jamais par envie d'attaquer qu'elle se soulève, mais par impatience de souffrir.*'<sup>1</sup> These are the words of a great man ; of a minister of state ; and a zealous assertor of monarchy. They are applied to the system of favoritism which was adopted by Henry III of

<sup>1</sup> Mém. de Sully, tom. i. p. 133.

France, and to the dreadful consequences it produces. What he says of revolutions is equally true of all great disturbances. If this presumption in favour of the subjects against the trustees of power be not the more probable I am sure it is the more comfortable speculation ; because it is more easy to change an administration, than to reform a people.

*The System of Government by the Court*

(From the same.)

It is the nature of despotism to abhor power held by any means but its own momentary pleasure ; and to annihilate all intermediate situations between boundless strength on its own part, and total debility on the part of the people.

To get rid of all this intermediate and independent importance, and to secure to the court the unlimited & uncontrolled use of its own vast influence, under the sole direction of its own private favour, has for some years past been the great object of policy. If this were compassed the influence of the crown must of course produce all the effects which the most sanguine partisans of the court could possibly desire. Government might then be carried on without any concurrence on the part of the people, without any attention to the dignity of the greater or the affections of the lower sorts. A new project was therefore devised by a certain set of intriguing men, totally different from the system of administration which had prevailed since the accession of the House of Brunswick. This project, I have heard, was first conceived by some persons in the court of Frederick, Prince of Wales. . . .

The first part of the reformed plan was to draw a line which should separate the court from the ministry. Hitherto these names had been looked upon as synonymous ; but for the future, court and administration were to be co-

sidered as things totally distinct. By this operation two systems of administration were to be formed ; one which should be in the real secret and confidence ; the other merely ostensible, to perform the official and executory duties of government. The latter were alone to be responsible ; whilst the real advisers, who enjoyed all the power, were effectually removed from all the danger.

Secondly, *A party under these leaders was to be formed in favour of the court against the ministry* : this party was to have a large share in the emoluments of government, to and to hold it totally separate from, and independent of, ostensible administration.

The third point, and that on which the success of the whole scheme ultimately depended, was *to bring parliament to an acquiescence in this project*. Parliament was therefore to be taught by degrees a total indifference to the persons, rank, influence, abilities, connexions, and character of the ministers of the crown. By means of a discipline, on which I shall say more hereafter, that body was to be habituated to the most opposite interests and the most discordant politics. All connexions and dependencies among subjects were to be entirely dissolved. . . .

To recommend this system to the people, a perspective view of the court, gorgeously painted, and finely illuminated from within, was exhibited to the gaping multitude. Party was to be totally done away, with all its evil works. Corruption was to be cast down from court, as *Atlas* was from heaven. Power was thenceforward to be the chosen residence of public spirit ; and no one was to be supposed under any sinister influence, except those who had the misfortune to be in disgrace at court, which was to stand in lieu of all vices and all corruptions ; a scheme of perfection to be realized in a monarchy far beyond the visionary republic of Plato. The whole scenery was exactly disposed to captivate those good souls, whose credulous morality is

so invaluable a treasure to crafty politicians. Indeed it was wherewithal to charm everybody, except those who are not much pleased with professions of supernatural virtue, who know of what stuff such professions are made for what purposes they are designed, and in what they are sure constantly to end. Many innocent gentlemen, had been talking prose all their lives without knowing anything of the matter, began at last to open their mouths upon their own merits, and to attribute their not having been lords of the treasury and lords of trade many years before merely to the prevalence of party and to ministerial power, which had frustrated the good intentions of the court in favour of their abilities. Now was the time to unlock the sealed fountain of royal bounty, which had been infamously monopolized and huckstered, and let it flow at large upon the whole people. The time had come to restore royalty to its original splendour. *Meilleur Roy hors de page*, became a sort of watchword. And it was constantly in the mouths of all the runners of the country that nothing could preserve the balance of the constitution from being overturned by the rabble, or by a faction of the nobility, but to free the sovereign effectually from ministerial tyranny under which the royal dignity had been oppressed in the person of his majesty's grandfather.

*The Perversion of the House of Commons*

(From the same.)

PARLIAMENT was indeed the great object of all their politics, the end at which they aimed, as well as the instrument by which they were to operate. But, before parliament could be made subservient to a system which it was to be degraded from the dignity of a national council into a mere member of the court, it must be greatly changed from its original character.

In speaking of this body, I have my eye chiefly on the House of Commons. I hope I shall be indulged in a few observations on the nature and character of that assembly; not with regard to its *legal form and power*, but to its *spirit*, and to the purposes it is meant to answer in the constitution.

The House of Commons was supposed originally to be *no part of the standing government of this country*. It was considered as a *control*, issuing *immediately* from the people, and speedily to be resolved into the mass from whence it arose. In this respect it was in the higher part of government what juries are in the lower. The capacity of a magistrate being transitory, and that of a citizen permanent, the latter capacity it was hoped would of course preponderate in all discussions, not only between the people and the standing authority of the crown, but between the people and the fleeting authority of the House of Commons itself. It was hoped that, being of a middle nature between subject and government, they would feel with a more tender and a nearer interest every-<sup>20</sup> thing that concerned the people than the other remoter and more permanent parts of legislature.

Whatever alterations time and the necessary accommodation of business may have introduced, this character can never be sustained, unless the House of Commons shall be made to bear some stamp of the actual disposition of the people at large. It would (among public misfortunes) be an evil more natural and tolerable that the House of Commons should be infected with every epidemical frenzy of the people, as this would indicate some consanguinity, <sup>30</sup> some sympathy of nature with their constituents, than that they should in all cases be wholly untouched by the opinions and feelings of the people out of doors. By this want of sympathy they would cease to be a House of Commons. For it is not the derivation of the power of

that House from the people which makes it in a sense their representative. The king is the representative of the people ; so are the lords ; so are the judges. all are trustees for the people, as well as the common because no power is given for the sole sake of the king and although government certainly is an institution divine authority, yet its forms, and the persons who administer it, all originate from the people.

A popular origin cannot therefore be the characteristic distinction of a popular representative. This applies equally to all parts of government, and in all forms, virtue, spirit, and essence of a House of Commons consists in its being the express image of the feelings of the nation. It was not instituted to be a control *upon* the people, of late it has been taught, by a doctrine of the most vicious tendency. It was designed as a control *for* the people. Other institutions have been formed for the purpose of checking popular excesses ; and they are, I apprehend, fully adequate to their object. If not, they ought to be made so. The House of Commons, as it was intended for the support of peace and subordination, miserably appointed for that service ; having no stronger weapon than its mace, and no better officer than its serjeant-at-arms, which it can command of its own proper authority. A vigilant and jealous eye over executors and judicial magistracy ; an anxious care of public money ; openness, approaching towards facility, to public complaint : these seem to be the true characteristics of a House of Commons. But an addressing House of Commons, a petitioning nation ; a House of Commons full of confidence, when the nation is plunged in despair ; in utmost harmony with ministers, whom the people regard with the utmost abhorrence ; who vote thanks, when public opinion calls upon them for impeachments ; who are eager to grant, when the general voice demands account.

who, in all disputes between the people and administration, presume against the people ; who punish their disorders, but refuse even to inquire into the provocations to them ; this is an unnatural, a monstrous state of things in this constitution. Such an assembly may be a great, wise, awful senate ; but it is not, to any popular purpose, a House of Commons.

*The Tameness of the Peers*

(From the same.)

I AM no friend to aristocracy, in the sense at least in which that word is usually understood. If it were not a bad habit to moot cases on the supposed ruin of the <sup>10</sup> constitution, I should be free to declare that, if it must perish, I would rather by far see it resolved into any other form than lost in that austere and insolent domination. But, whatever my dislikes may be, my fears are not upon that quarter. The question on the influence of a court, and of a peerage, is not, which of the two dangers is the more eligible, but which is the more imminent. He is but a poor observer who has not seen that the generality of peers, far from supporting themselves in a state of independent greatness, are but too apt to fall into an oblivion <sup>20</sup> of their proper dignity, and to run headlong into an abject servitude. Would to God it were true that the fault of our peers were too much spirit !

*The Practicable Remedies*

(From the same.)

THAT man who before he comes into power has no friends, or who coming into power is obliged to desert his friends, or who losing it has no friends to sympathize with him ; he who has no sway among any part of the landed or commercial interest, but whose whole importance

has begun with his office, and is sure to end with it ; a person who ought never to be suffered by a controll parliament to continue in any of those situations wh confer the lead and direction of all our public affai; because such a man *has no connexion with the interest of the people.*

Those knots or cabals of men who have got together avowedly without any public principle, in order to s their conjunct iniquity at the higher rate, and are therefore universally odious, ought never to be suffered to domine in the state ; because they have *no connexion with the sentiments and opinions of the people.*

These are considerations which in my opinion enfor the necessity of having some better reason, in a fr country—and a free parliament, for supporting t ministers of the crown than that short one, *That the king has thought proper to appoint them.* There is somethin very courtly in this. But it is a principle pregnant with sorts of mischief, in a constitution like ours, to turn the views of active men from the country to the court. Wha ever be the road to power, that is the road which will be trod. If the opinion of the country be of no use as a mean of power or consideration, the qualities which usuall procure that opinion will be no longer cultivated. An whether it will be right, in a state so popular in its constitution as ours, to leave ambition without popular motive and to trust all to the operation of pure virtue in the minds of kings, and ministers, and public men, must be submitted to the judgement and good sense of the peopl 30 of England....

It is not more the duty than it is the interest of a prince to aim at giving tranquillity to his government. But those who advise him may have an interest in disorde and confusion. If the opinion of the people is agaist them, they will naturally wish that it should have no

prevalence. Here it is that the people must on their part show themselves sensible of their own value. Their whole importance, in the first instance, and afterwards their whole freedom, is at stake. Their freedom cannot long survive their importance. Here it is that the natural strength of the kingdom, the great peers, the leading landed gentlemen, the opulent merchants and manufacturers, the substantial yeomanry, must interpose, to rescue their prince, themselves, and their posterity. . . .

In the situation in which we stand, with an immense <sup>10</sup> revenue, an enormous debt, mighty establishments, government itself a great banker and a great merchant, I see no other way for the preservation of a decent attention to public interest in the representatives but *the interposition of the body of the people itself*, whenever it shall appear, by some flagrant and notorious act, by some capital innovation, that these representatives are going to overleap the fences of the law, and to introduce an arbitrary power. This interposition is a most unpleasant remedy. But, if it be a legal remedy, it is intended on some occasion to be <sup>20</sup> used ; to be used then only, when it is evident that nothing else can hold the constitution to its true principles.

The distempers of monarchy were the great subjects of apprehension and redress in the last century ; in this, the distempers of parliament. It is not in parliament alone that the remedy for parliamentary disorders can be completed ; hardly indeed can it begin there. Until a confidence in government is re-established, the people ought to be excited to a more strict and detailed attention to the conduct of their representatives. Standards for <sup>30</sup> judging more systematically upon their conduct ought to be settled in the meetings of counties and corporations. Frequent and correct lists of the voters in all important questions ought to be procured.

By such means something may be done. By such means

it may appear who those are that, by an indiscriminate support of all administrations, have totally banished all integrity and confidence out of public proceedings ; have confounded the best men with the worst ; and weakened and dissolved, instead of strengthening and compacting, the general frame of government.

*A Defence of Party*

(From the same.)

THIS cabal has, with great success, propagated a doctrine which serves for a colour to those acts of treachery ; and whilst it receives any degree of countenance, it will be 10 utterly senseless to look for a vigorous opposition to the court party. The doctrine is this : That all political connexions are in their nature factious, and as such ought to be dissipated and destroyed ; and that the rule for forming administrations is mere personal ability, rated by the judgement of this cabal upon it, and taken by draughts from every division and denomination of public men. This decree was solemnly promulgated by the head of the court corps, the Earl of Bute himself, in a speech which he made, in the year 1766, against the then administration, 20 the only administration which he has ever been known directly and publicly to oppose.

It is indeed no way wonderful that such persons should make such declarations. That connexion and faction are equivalent terms is an opinion which has been carefully inculcated at all times by unconstitutional statesmen. The reason is evident. Whilst men are linked together, they easily and speedily communicate the alarm of any evil design. They are enabled to fathom it with common counsel, and to oppose it with united strength. Whereas, 30 when they lie dispersed, without concert, order, or discipline, communication is uncertain, counsel difficult,

and resistance impracticable. Where men are not acquainted with each other's principles, nor experienced in each other's talents, nor at all practised in their mutual habitudes and dispositions by joint efforts in business ; no personal confidence, no friendship, no common interest, subsisting among them ; it is evidently impossible that they can act a public part with uniformity, perseverance, or efficacy. In a connexion, the most inconsiderable man, by adding to the weight of the whole, has his value, and his use ; out of it, the greatest talents are wholly unserviceable to the public. No man, who is not inflamed by vain-glory into enthusiasm, can flatter himself that his single, unsupported, desultory, unsystematic endeavours are of power to defeat the subtle designs and united cabals of ambitious citizens. When bad men combine, the good must associate ; else they will fall, one by one, an unpitied sacrifice in a contemptible struggle. . . .

In order to throw an odium on political connexion, these politicians suppose it a necessary incident to it that you are blindly to follow the opinions of your party, 20 when in direct opposition to your own clear ideas ; a degree of servitude that no worthy man could bear the thought of submitting to ; and such as, I believe, no connexions (except some court factions) ever could be so senselessly tyrannical as to impose. Men thinking freely will, in particular instances, think differently. But still, as the greater part of the measures which arise in the course of public business are related to, or dependent on, some great, *leading general principles in government*, a man must be peculiarly unfortunate in the choice of his political 30 company, if he does not agree with them at least nine times in ten. If he does not concur in these general principles upon which the party is founded, and which necessarily draw on a concurrence in their application, he ought from the beginning to have chosen some other, more conformable

to his opinions. When the question is in its nature doubtful, or not very material, the modesty which becomes an individual, and (in spite of our court moralists) that partiality which becomes a well-chosen friendship, will frequently bring on an acquiescence in the general sentiment. Thus the disagreement will naturally be rare; it will be only enough to indulge freedom, without violating concord, or disturbing arrangement. And this is all that ever was required for a character of the greatest uniformity  
10 and steadiness in connexion. How men can proceed without any connexion at all, is to me utterly incomprehensible. Of what sort of materials must that man be made, how must he be tempered and put together, who can sit whole years in parliament, with five hundred and fifty of his fellow-citizens, amidst the storm of such tempestuous passions, in the sharp conflict of so many wits and tempers and characters, in the agitation of such mighty questions, in the discussion of such vast and ponderous interests, without seeing any one sort of men whose  
20 character, conduct, or disposition, would lead him to associate himself with them, to aid and be aided, in any one system of public utility?

I remember an old scholastic aphorism which says, 'that the man who lives wholly detached from others must be either an angel or a devil.' When I see in any of these detached gentlemen of our times the angelic purity, power, and beneficence, I shall admit them to be angels. In the meantime we are born only to be men. We shall do enough if we form ourselves to be good ones.  
30 It is therefore our business carefully to cultivate in our minds, to rear to the most perfect vigour and maturity, every sort of generous and honest feeling that belongs to our nature. To bring the dispositions that are lovely in private life into the service and conduct of the commonwealth; so to be patriots, as not to forget we are gentlemen.

To cultivate friendships, and to incur enmities. To have both strong, but both selected ; in the one to be placable ; in the other immovable. To model our principles to our duties and our situation. To be fully persuaded that all virtue which is impracticable is spurious ; and rather to run the risk of falling into faults in a course which leads us to act with effect and energy, than to loiter out our days without blame and without use. Public life is a situation of power and energy ; he trespasses against his duty who sleeps upon his watch, as well as he that goes over to the enemy.

### *Parliamentary Reform*

(From *Observations on a Publication entitled 'The Present State of the Nation'*, 1769.)

I SEE nothing in them [i.e. the proposals of an extended franchise] but what is usual with the author ; an attempt to raise discontent in the people of England, to balance those discontents the measures of his friends had already raised in America. What other reason can he have for suggesting, that we are not happy enough to enjoy a sufficient number of voters in England ? I believe that most sober thinkers on this subject are rather of opinion that our fault is on the other side ; and that it would be more 20 in the spirit of our constitution, and more agreeable to the pattern of our best laws, by lessening the number, to add to the weight and independency of our voters. And truly, considering the immense and dangerous charge of elections, the prostitute and daring venality, the corruption of manners, the idleness and profligacy of the lower sort of voters, no prudent man would propose to increase such an evil, if it be, as I fear it is, out of our power to administer to it any remedy.

(From the Speech in the House of Commons, May 7, 1782.)

THE House of Commons . . . undoubtedly is no representative of the people, as a collection of individuals. Nobody pretends it, nobody can justify such an assertion. When you come to examine into this claim of right, founded on the right of self-government in each individual, you find the thing demanded infinitively short of the principle of the demand. What! one-third only of the legislature, and of the government no share at all? What sort of treaty of partition is this for those who have an inherent right to the whole? Give them all they ask, and your grant is still a cheat; for how comes only a third to be their younger children's fortune in this settlement? How came they neither to have the choice of kings, or lords, or judges, or generals, or admirals, or bishops, or priests, or ministers, or justices of peace? Why, what have you to answer in favour of the prior rights of the crown and peerage but this—our constitution is a prescriptive constitution; it is a constitution whose sole authority is that it has existed time out of mind. It is settled in these two portions against one, legislatively; and in the whole of the judicature, the whole of the federal capacity, of the executive, the prudential and the financial administration, in one alone. Nor was your House of Lords and the prerogatives of the crown settled on any adjudication in favour of natural rights, for they could never be so partitioned. Your king, your lords, your judges, your juries grand and little, are all prescriptive; and what proves it is, the disputes not yet concluded, and never near becoming so, when any of them first originated. Prescription is the most solid of all titles, not only to property, but, which is to secure that property, to government. They harmonize with each other, and give mutual aid to one another. It is accompanied with another ground of authority in the constitution of the human mind, presumption. It is

a presumption in favour of any settled scheme of government against any untried project that a nation has long existed and flourished under it. It is a better presumption even of the *choice* of a nation, far better than any sudden and temporary arrangement by actual election. Because a nation is not an idea only of local extent and individual momentary aggregation, but it is an idea of continuity which extends in time as well as in numbers and in space. And this is a choice not of one day, or one set of people, not a tumultuary and giddy choice ; it is 10 a deliberate election of ages and of generations ; it is a constitution made by what is ten thousand times better than choice, it is made by the peculiar circumstances, occasions, tempers, dispositions, and moral, civil, and social habitudes of the people, which disclose themselves only in a long space of time. It is a vestment which accommodates itself to the body. Nor is prescription of government formed upon blind unmeaning prejudices— for man is a most unwise and a most wise being. The individual is foolish. The multitude, for the moment, is 20 foolish when they act without deliberation ; but the species is wise, and when time is given to it, as a species, it almost always acts right. . . .

It suggests melancholy reflections, in consequence of the strange course we have long held, that we are now no longer quarrelling about the character, or about the conduct of men, or the tenor of measures ; but we are grown out of humour with the English constitution itself ; this is become the object of the animosity of Englishmen. This constitution in former days used to be the admiration 30 and the envy of the world ; it was the pattern of politicians ; the theme of the eloquent ; the meditation of the philosopher in every part of the world. As to Englishmen, it was their pride, their consolation. By it they lived, for it they were ready to die. Its defects, if it had any, were

partly covered by partiality, and partly borne by prudence. Now all its excellences are forgot, its faults are now forcibly dragged into day, exaggerated by every artifice of representation. It is despised and rejected of men ; and every device and invention of ingenuity, or idleness, set up in opposition or in preference to it. It is to this humour and it is to the measures growing out of it, that I see myself (I hope not alone) in the most determined opposition. Never before did we at any time in this country  
10 meet upon the theory of our frame of government, to sit in judgement on the constitution of our country, to call it as a delinquent before us, and to accuse it of every defect and every vice ; to see whether it, an object of our veneration, even our adoration, did or did not accord with a pre-conceived scheme in the minds of certain gentlemen. Cast your eyes on the journals of parliament. It is for fear of losing the inestimable treasure we have that I do not venture to game it out of my hands for the vain hope of improving it. I look with filial reverence on the constitu-  
20 tion of my country, and never will cut it in pieces, and put it into the kettle of any magician, in order to boil it, with the puddle of their compounds, into youth and vigour. On the contrary, I will drive away such pretenders ; I will nurse its venerable age, and with lenient arts extend a parent's breath.

(From the Letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe, 1792.)

YOU separate very properly the sober, rational, and substantial part of their description [i.e. the Irish Catholics] from the rest. You give, as you ought to do, weight only to the former. What I have always thought of the matter  
30 is this—that the most poor, illiterate, and uninformed creatures upon earth are judges of a *practical* oppression. It is a matter of feeling ; and as such persons generally have felt most of it, and are not of an over-lively sensibility,

they are the best judges of it. But for the *real cause*, or the *appropriate remedy*, they ought never to be called into council about the one or the other. They ought to be totally shut out ; because their reason is weak ; because, when once roused, their passions are ungoverned ; because they want information ; because the smallness of the property which individually they possess renders them less attentive to the consequence of the measures they adopt in affairs of moment. When I find a great cry amongst the people who speculate little, I think myself called seriously to examine into it, and to separate the real cause from the ill effects of the passion it may excite, and the bad use which artful men may make of an irritation of the popular mind.

*Members of Parliament and their Constituents*

(From the Speech at Bristol on being elected to Parliament for that city, November 1774.)

CERTAINLY, gentlemen, it ought to be the happiness and glory of a representative to live in the strictest union, the closest correspondence, and the most unreserved communication with his constituents. Their wishes ought to have great weight with him ; their opinion high respect ; their business unremitting attention. It is his duty to sacrifice his repose, his pleasures, his satisfactions, to theirs ; and above all, ever, and in all cases, to prefer their interest to his own. But his unbiased opinion, his mature judgement, his enlightened conscience, he ought not to sacrifice to you ; to any man, or to any set of men living. These he does not derive from your pleasure ; no, nor from the law and the constitution. They are a trust from Providence, for the abuse of which he is deeply answerable. Your representative owes you, not his industry only, but his judgement ; and he betrays, instead of serving you, if he sacrifices it to your opinion

. My worthy colleague says his will ought to be subservient to yours. If that be all, the thing is innocent. If government were a matter of will upon any side, yours, without question, ought to be superior. But government and legislation are matters of reason and judgement, and not of inclination ; and what sort of reason is that, in which the determination precedes the discussion ; in which one set of men deliberate, and another decide ; and where those who form the conclusion are perhaps three hundred miles <sup>10</sup> distant from those who hear the arguments ?

To deliver an opinion is the right of all men ; that of constituents is a weighty and respectable opinion, which a representative ought always to rejoice to hear ; and which he ought always most seriously to consider. But *authoritative* instructions, *mandates* issued, which the member is bound blindly and implicitly to obey, to vote, and to argue for, though contrary to the clearest conviction of his judgement and conscience,--these are things utterly unknown to the laws of this land, and which arise <sup>20</sup> from a fundamental mistake of the whole order and tenor of our constitution.

Parliament is not a *congress* of ambassadors from different and hostile interests ; which interests each must maintain, as an agent and advocate, against other agents and advocates ; but parliament is a *deliberative* assembly of *one* nation, with *one* interest, that of the whole ; where, not local purposes, not local prejudices ought to guide, but the general good, resulting from the general reason of the whole. You choose a member indeed ; but when <sup>30</sup> you have chosen him, he is not member of Bristol, but he is a member of *parliament*. If the local constituent should have an interest, or should form an hasty opinion, evidently opposite to the real good of the rest of the community, the member for that place ought to be as far, as any other, from any endeavour to give it effect. I beg pardon for

saying so much on this subject. I have been unwillingly drawn into it ; but I shall ever use a respectful frankness of communication with you. Your faithful friend, your devoted servant, I shall be to the end of my life : a flatterer you do not wish for. On this point of instructions, however, I think it scarcely possible we ever can have any sort of difference. Perhaps I may give you too much, rather than too little trouble.

*The Province of Government*

(From *Thoughts and Details on Scarcity*, 1795.)

IT is one of the finest problems in legislation, and what has often engaged my thoughts whilst I followed that profession, ‘ what the state ought to take upon itself to direct by the public wisdom, and what it ought to leave, with as little interference as possible, to individual discretion ’. Nothing, certainly, can be laid down on the subject that will not admit of exceptions, many permanent, some occasional. But the clearest line of distinction which I could draw whilst I had my chalk to draw any line, was this ; that the state ought to confine itself to what regards the state, or the creatures of the state, namely, the exterior establishment of its religion ; its magistracy ; its revenue ;<sup>20</sup> its military force by sea and land ; the corporations that owe their existence to its fiat ; in a word, to everything that is *truly and properly* public, to the public peace, to the public safety, to the public order, to the public prosperity. In its preventive police it ought to be sparing in its efforts, and to employ means, rather few, unfrequent, and strong, than many and frequent, and, of course, as they multiply their puny politic race and dwindle, small and feeble. Statesmen who know themselves will, with the dignity which belongs to wisdom, proceed only in this the <sup>30</sup> superior orb, and first mover of their duty steadily, vigi-

lantly, severely, courageously : whatever remains will, in a manner, provide for itself. But as they descend from the state to the province, from a province to a parish, and from a parish to a private house, they go on accelerated in their fall. They *cannot* do the lower duty ; and, in proportion as they try it, they will certainly fail in the higher. They ought to know the different departments of things ; what belongs to laws, and what manners alone can regulate. To these great politicians may give a leaning, but they <sup>10</sup> cannot give a law.

*Burke's Measures for Economical Reform ; their Moderation*

(From the Speech presenting the Bill, February 11, 1780.)

As it is the interest of government that reformation should be early, it is the interest of the people that it should be temperate. It is their interest, because a temperate reform is permanent ; and because it has a principle of growth. Whenever we improve, it is right to leave room for a further improvement. It is right to consider, to look about us, to examine the effect of what we have done. Then we can proceed with confidence, because we can proceed with intelligence. Whereas in hot reformations,  
<sup>20</sup> in what men, more zealous than considerate, call *making clear work*, the whole is generally so crude, so harsh, so indigested ; mixed with so much imprudence, and so much injustice ; so contrary to the whole course of human nature, and human institutions, that the very people who are most eager for it are among the first to grow disgusted at what they have done. Then some part of the abdicated grievance is recalled from its exile in order to become a corrective of the correction. Then the abuse assumes all the credit and popularity of a reform. The very idea of  
<sup>30</sup> purity and disinterestedness in politics falls into disrepute,

and is considered as a vision of hot and inexperienced men ; and thus disorders become incurable, not by the virulence of their own quality, but by the unapt and violent nature of the remedies. A great part, therefore, of my idea of reform is meant to operate gradually ; some benefits will come at a nearer, some at a more remote, period. We must no more make haste to be rich by parsimony, than by intemperate acquisition.

*Economical Reform : the Royal Household*

(From the same.)

BUT when the reason of old establishments is gone, it is absurd to preserve nothing but the burden of them.<sup>10</sup> This is superstitiously to embalm a carcass not worth an ounce of the gums that are used to preserve it. It is to burn precious oils in the tomb ; it is to offer meat and drink to the dead,—not so much an honour to the deceased as a disgrace to the survivors. Our palaces are vast inhospitable halls. There the bleak winds, there ‘Boreas, and Eurus, and Caurus, and Argestes loud’, howling through the vacant lobbies, and clattering the doors of deserted guard-rooms, appal the imagination, and conjure up the grim spectres of departed tyrants—the Saxon, the <sup>20</sup> Norman, and the Dane ; the stern Edwards and fierce Henries—who stalk from desolation to desolation, through the dreary vacuity and melancholy succession of chill and comfortless chambers. When this tumult subsides, a dead, and still more frightful silence would reign in this desert, if every now and then the tacking of hammers did not announce that those constant attendants upon all courts in all ages, jobs, were still alive ; for whose sake alone it is that any trace of ancient grandeur is suffered to remain. These palaces are a true emblem of some governments ; the inhabitants are decayed, but the governors and magistrates still flourish. They put me in mind of <sup>30</sup>

*Old Sarum*, where the representatives, more in number than the constituents, only serve to inform us that this was once a place of trade, and sounding with ‘the bustle of men’, though now you can only trace the street by the colour of the corn; and its sole manufacture is in members of parliament.

These old establishments were formed also on a third principle, still more adverse to the living economy of the age. They were formed, sir, on the principle of *purveyance* and *receipt in kind*. In former days, when the household was vast, and the supply scanty and precarious, the royal purveyors, sallying forth from under the Gothic portcullis to purchase provision with power and prerogative instead of money, brought home the plunder of a hundred markets, and all that could be seized from a flying and hiding country, and deposited their spoil in a hundred caverns, with each its keeper. There, every commodity, received in its rawest condition, went through all the process which fitted it for use. This inconvenient receipt produced an economy suited only to itself. It multiplied offices beyond all measure; buttery, pantry, and all that rabble of places which, though profitable to the holders and expensive to the state, are almost too mean to mention. . . .

If therefore we aim at regulating this household, the question will be, whether we ought to economize by *detail* or by *principle*? The example we have had of the success of an attempt to economize by detail, and under establishments adverse to the attempt, may tend to decide this question.

At the beginning of his majesty's reign, Lord Talbot came to the administration of a great department in the household. I believe no man ever entered into his majesty's service, or into the service of any prince, with a more clear integrity, or with more zeal and affection for the interest of his master; and, I must add, with

abilities for a still higher service. Economy was then announced as a maxim of the reign. This noble lord therefore made several attempts towards a reform. In the year 1777, when the king's civil list debts came last to be paid, he explained very fully the success of his undertaking. He told the House of Lords, that he had attempted to reduce the charges of the king's tables, and his kitchen.—The thing, sir, was not below him. He knew that there is nothing interesting in the concerns of men whom we love and honour that is beneath our attention.—‘Love’, says <sup>10</sup> one of our old poets, ‘esteems no office mean’; and with still more spirit, ‘entire affection scorneth nicer hands’. Frugality, sir, is founded on the principle that all riches have limits. A royal household, grown enormous, even in the meanest departments, may weaken and perhaps destroy all energy in the highest offices of the state. The gorging a royal kitchen may stint and famish the negotiations of a kingdom. Therefore the object was worthy of his, was worthy of any man's attention.

In consequence of this noble lord's resolution (as he <sup>20</sup> told the other House), he reduced several tables, and put the persons entitled to them upon board wages, much to their own satisfaction. But unluckily subsequent duties requiring constant attendance, it was not possible to prevent their being fed where they were employed—and thus the first step towards economy doubled the expense.

There was another disaster far more doleful than this. I shall state it, as the cause of that misfortune lies at the bottom of almost all our prodigality. Lord Talbot attempted to reform the kitchen; but such, as he well <sup>30</sup> observed, is the consequence of having duty done by one person, whilst another enjoys the emoluments, that he found himself frustrated in all his designs. On that rock, his whole adventure split—his whole scheme of economy was dashed to pieces; his department became more

expensive than ever ;—the civil list debt accumulated. Why? It was truly from a cause which, though perfect adequate to the effect, one would not have instant guessed ;—It was because the *turnspit in the king's kitchen was a member of parliament!*<sup>1</sup> The king's domest servants were all undone ; his tradesmen remained unpai and became bankrupt—because the *turnspit of the king kitchen was a member of parliament.* His majesty's slumbe were interrupted, his pillow was stuffed with thorns, an to his peace of mind entirely broken—because the *king's turn spit was a member of parliament.* The judges were unpaid the justice of the kingdom bent and gave way ; the foreig ministers remained inactive and unprovided ; the system of Europe was dissolved ; the chain of our alliances was broken ; all the wheels of government at home and abroad were stopped—because the *king's turnspit was a member of parliament!*

#### *Offices Assigned as Pensions*

(From the same.)

SIR, I shall be asked why I do not choose to destroy those offices which are pensions and appoint pensions under the direct title in their stead? I allow that in some cases it leads to abuse to have things appointed for one purpose and applied to another. I have no great objections to such a change : but I do not think it quite prudent for me to propose it. If I should take away the present establishment, the burden of proof rests upon me that so many pensions, and no more, and to such an amount each, and no more, are necessary for the public service. This is what I can never prove, for it is a thing incapable of definition. I do not like to take away an object that I think answers my purpose, in hopes of getting

<sup>1</sup> Vide Lord Talbot's speech in Almond's *Parliamentary Register*, vol. ii, p. 79, of the proceedings of the Lords.

it back again in a better shape. People will bear an old establishment, when its excess is corrected, who will revolt at a new one. I do not think these office-pensions to be more in number than sufficient: but on that point the House will exercise its discretion. As to abuse, I am convinced that very few trusts in the ordinary course of administration have admitted less abuse than this. Efficient ministers have been their own paymasters. It is true. But their very partiality has operated as a kind of justice; and still it was service that was paid. When we look over 10 this exchequer list, we find it filled with the descendants of the Walpoles, of the Pelhams, of the Townshends, names to whom this country owes its liberties, and to whom his majesty owes his crown. It was in one of these lines that the immense and envied employment he now holds came to a certain duke,<sup>1</sup> who is now probably sitting quietly at a very good dinner directly under us, and acting *high life below stairs*, whilst we, his masters, are filling our mouths with unsubstantial sound and talking of hungry economy over his head. But he is the elder branch of an 20 ancient and decayed house, joined to, and repaired by the reward of services done by another. I respect the original title and the first purchase of merited wealth and honour through all its descents, through all its transfers, and all its assignments. May such fountains never be dried up! May they ever flow with their original purity, and refresh and fructify the commonwealth for ages!

### *The Liberation of Irish Trade*

(From *Two Letters to Gentlemen in the City of Bristol*, 1778.)

Is it quite fair to suppose that I have no other motive for yielding to them, but a desire of acting *against* my constituents? It is for *you* and for *your* interest, as a dear, 30

<sup>1</sup> Duke of Newcastle, whose dining-room was under the House of Commons.

cherished, and respected part of a valuable whole, that I have taken my share in this question. You do not, you cannot suffer by it. If honesty be true policy with regard to the transient interest of individuals, it is much more certainly so with regard to the permanent interests of communities. I know that it is but too natural for us to see our own *certain* ruin in the *possible* prosperity of other people. It is hard to persuade us that everything which is *got* by another is not *taken* from ourselves. But it is fit that  
10 we should get the better of these suggestions, which come from what is not the best and soundest part of our nature, and that we should form to ourselves a way of thinking more rational, more just, and more religious. Trade is not a limited thing ; as if the objects of mutual demand and consumption could not stretch beyond the bounds of our jealousies. God has given the earth to the children of men, and He has undoubtedly, in giving it to them, given them what is abundantly sufficient for all their exigencies ; not a scanty, but a most liberal provision for them all.  
20 The Author of our nature has written it strongly in that nature, and has promulgated the same law in His written word, that man shall eat his bread by his labour ; and I am persuaded that no man, and no combination of men, for their own ideas of their particular profit, can, without great impiety, undertake to say that he *shall not* do so ; that they have no sort of right either to prevent the labour, or to withhold the bread. Ireland, having received no compensation, directly or indirectly, for any restraints on their trade, ought not, in justice or common honesty, to be  
30 made subject to such restraints. I do not mean to impeach the right of the parliament of Great Britain to make laws for the trade of Ireland. I only speak of what laws it is right for parliament to make.

It is nothing to an oppressed people to say that in part they are protected at our charge. The military force which

shall be kept up in order to cramp the natural faculties of a people, and to prevent their arrival to their utmost prosperity, is the instrument of their servitude, not the means of their protection. To protect men is to forward, and not to restrain, their improvement. Else, what is it more than to avow to them, and to the world, that you guard them from others only to make them a prey to yourself ? This fundamental nature of protection does not belong to free, but to all governments ; and is as valid in Turkey as in Great Britain. No government ought to 10 own that it exists for the purpose of checking the prosperity of its people, or that there is such a principle involved in its policy. . . .

It is very unfortunate that we should consider those as rivals, whom we ought to regard as fellow-labourers in a common cause. Ireland has never made a single step in its progress towards prosperity by which you have not had a share, and perhaps the greatest share, in the benefit. That progress has been chiefly owing to her own natural advantages, and her own efforts, which, after a long time, 20 and by slow degrees, have prevailed in some measure over the mischievous systems which have been adopted. Far enough she is still from having arrived even at an ordinary state of perfection ; and if our jealousies were to be converted into politics as systematically as some would have them, the trade of Ireland would vanish out of the system of commerce. But believe me, if Ireland is beneficial to you, it is so not from the parts in which it is restrained, but from those in which it is left free, though not left 30 unrivalled. The greater its freedom, the greater must be your advantage. If you should lose in one way, you will gain in twenty.

*Catholic Emancipation in England*

(From the Speech at Bristol previous to the Election, 1780.)

But if I was unable to reconcile such a denial to the contracted principles of local duty, what answer could I give to the broad claims of general humanity ? I confess to you freely that the sufferings and distresses of the people of America in this cruel war have at times affected me more deeply than I can express. I felt every Gazette of triumph as a blow upon my heart, which has a hundred times sunk and fainted within me at all the mischiefs brought upon those who bear the whole brunt of war in the heart of their country. Yet the Americans are utter strangers to me ; a nation among whom I am not sure that I have a single acquaintance. Was I to suffer my mind to be so unaccountably warped ; was I to keep such iniquitous weights and measures of temper and of reason, as to sympathize with those who are in open rebellion against an authority which I respect, at war with a country which by every title ought to be, and is most dear to me ; and yet to have no feeling at all for the hardships and indignities suffered by men who, by their very vicinity, are bound up in a nearer relation to us ; who contribute their share, and more than their share, to common prosperity ; who perform the common offices of social life, and who obey the laws to the full as well as I do ? Gentlemen, the danger to the state being out of the question (of which, let me tell you, statesmen themselves are apt to have but too exquisite a sense), I could assign no one reason of justice, policy, or feeling, for not concurring most cordially, as most cordially I did concur, in softening some part of that shameful servitude, under which several of my worthy fellow-citizens were groaning.

*Catholic Emancipation in Ireland*

(From the Letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe, 1792.)

THE whole being at discretion, I beg leave just to suggest some matters for your consideration—whether the government in church or state is likely to be more secure by continuing causes of grounded discontent to a very great number (say two millions) of the subjects. Or, whether the constitution, combined and balanced as it is, will be rendered more solid by depriving so large a part of the people of all concern, or interest, or share in its representation, actual or *virtual*. I here mean to lay an emphasis on the word *virtual*. Virtual representation is that in which there is a communion of interests, and a sympathy in feelings and desires between those who act in the name of any description of people, and the people in whose name they act, though the trustees are not actually chosen by them. This is virtual representation. Such a representation I think to be, in many cases, even better than the actual. It possesses most of its advantages, and is free from many of its inconveniences ; it corrects the irregularities in the literal representation, when the shifting current of human affairs, or the acting of public interests in different ways, carry it obliquely from its first line of direction. The people may err in their choice ; but common interest and common sentiment are rarely mistaken. But this sort of virtual representation cannot have a long or sure existence if it has not a substratum in the actual. The member must have some relation to the constituent. As things stand, the Catholic, as a Catholic, and belonging to a description, has no *virtual* relation to the representative ; but the *contrary*. There is a relation in mutual obligation. Gratitude may not always have a very lasting power ; but the frequent recurrence of an application for favours will revive and refresh it, and will necessarily produce some

degrees of mutual attention. It will produce, at least, acquaintance. The several descriptions of people will not be kept so much apart as they now are, as if they were not only separate nations, but separate species. The stigma and reproach, the hideous mask will be taken off, and men will see each other as they are. Sure I am that there have been thousands in Ireland who have never conversed with a Roman Catholic in their whole lives, unless they happened to talk to their gardener's workmen, or to ask their way, when they had lost it, in their sports ; or, at best, who had known them only as footmen, or other domestics of the second and third order : and so averse were they, some time ago, to have them near their persons, that they would not employ even those who could never find their way beyond the stable. I well remember a great, and in many respects a good man, who advertised for a blacksmith ; but, at the same time, added, he must be a Protestant. It is impossible that such a state of things, though natural goodness in many persons will undoubtedly make exceptions, must not produce alienation on the one side, and pride and insolence on the other.

*On the Toleration of Dissenters*

(From the Speech for the Relief of Protestant Dissenters, 1773.)

AT the same time that I would cut up the very root of atheism, I would respect all conscience ; all conscience that is really such, and which perhaps its very tenderness proves to be sincere. I wish to see the established church of England great and powerful ; I wish to see her foundations laid low and deep, that she may crush the giant powers of rebellious darkness ; I would have her head raised up to that Heaven to which she conducts us. I would have her open wide her hospitable gates by a noble and liberal comprehension. But I would have

no breaches in her wall. I would have her cherish all those who are within, and pity all those who are without ; I would have her a common blessing to the world, an example, if not an instructor to those who have not the happiness to belong to her ; I would have her give a lesson of peace to mankind, that a vexed and wandering generation might be taught to seek for repose and toleration in the maternal bosom of Christian charity, and not in the harlot lap of infidelity and indifference. Nothing has driven people more into that house of seduction than 10 the mutual hatred of Christian congregations. Long may we enjoy our church under a learned and edifying episcopacy. But episcopacy may fail, and religion exist. The most horrid and cruel blow that can be offered to civil society is through atheism. Do not promote diversity ; when you have it, bear it ; have as many sorts of religion as you find in your country ; there is a reasonable worship in them all. The others, the infidels, are outlaws of the constitution, not of this country, but of the human race. They are never, never to be supported, never to 20 be tolerated. Under the systematic attacks of these people I see some of the props of good government already begin to fail ; I see propagated principles which will not leave to religion even a toleration. I see myself sinking every day under the attacks of these wretched people—How shall I arm myself against them ? By uniting all those in affection who are united in the belief of the great principles of the Godhead that made and sustains the world. They who hold revelation give double assurance to the country. Even the man who does not hold revelation, yet who wishes that it were proved to him, who observes a pious silence with regard to it, such a man, though not a Christian, is governed by religious principles. Let him be tolerated in this country. Let it be but a serious religion, natural or revealed, take what you can get ; 30

cherish, blow up the slightest spark. One day it may be a pure and holy flame. By this proceeding you form an alliance, offensive and defensive, against those great ministers of darkness in the world who are endeavouring to shake all the works of God established in order and beauty.

*Burke as the Mentor of his Party*

(From a letter to the Duke of Richmond, November 17, 1772, in *Correspondence of Edmund Burke, 1744-97*; ed. Fitzwilliam and Bourke, in 4 volumes: vol. i, p. 375.)

As to your Grace's situation in the party and in the world, it would be the greatest injustice to Lord Rockingham not to say that he sees and feels his obligations to you in their full extent, and has often spoke as he ought of  
10 the unparalleled part you have acted. His nearest and oldest friends are, much in the same degree, your own. There can be but one opinion on your conduct and abilities. With regard to others, your grace is very sensible that you have not made your court to the world by forming yourself to a flattering exterior; but you put me in mind of Mr. Wilkes's observation when he makes love, that he will engage in such a pursuit against the handsomest fellow in England, and only desires a month's start of his rival on account of his face. Your month is past; and if your  
20 grace does not, everybody else does remark how much you grow on the public by the exertion of real talent and substantial virtue. You know you have already some fruits of them, and you will gather in such fruits every day, until your barns are as full as they can hold. One thing, and but one, I see against it, which is, that your grace dissipates your mind into too great a variety of minute pursuits, all of which, from the natural vehemence of your temperament, you follow with almost equal passion. It is wise, indeed, considering the many positive vexations,  
30 and the innumerable bitter disappointments of pleasure in

if their conduct and example hand down their principles to their successors, then their houses become the public repositories and offices of record for the constitution; not like the Tower or Rolls-chapel, where it is searched for, and sometimes in vain, in rotten parchments, under dripping and perishing walls, but in full vigour and acting in vital energy and power, in the character of the leading men and natural interests of the country.

## AMERICA

*Dramatis Personae:* (a) *George Grenville*

(From the Speech on American Taxation, 1774.)

No man can believe that at this time of day I mean to lean on the venerable memory of a great man, whose loss we deplore in common. Our little party differences have been long ago composed; and I have acted more with him, and certainly with more pleasure with him, than ever I acted against him. Undoubtedly Mr. Grenville was a first-rate figure in this country. With a masculine understanding, and a stout and resolute heart, he had an application undissipated and unwearied. He took public business not as a duty which he was to fulfil, but as a pleasure he was to enjoy; and he seemed to have no delight out of this House, except in such things as some way related to the business that was to be done within it. If he was ambitious, I will say this for him, his ambition was of a noble and generous strain. It was to raise himself, not by the low, pimping polities of a court, but to win his way to power, through the laborious gradations of public service; and to secure himself a well-earned rank in parliament by a thorough knowledge of its constitution and a perfect practice in all its business.

Sir, if such a man fell into errors, it must be from defects not intrinsical ; they must be rather sought in the particular habits of his life ; which, though they do not alter the groundwork of character, yet tinge it with their own hue. He was bred in a profession. He was bred to the law, which is, in my opinion, one of the first and noblest of human sciences ; a science which does more to quicken and invigorate the understanding than all the other kinds of learning put together ; but it is not apt, except in persons very happily born, to open and to liberalize the mind ~~to~~ exactly in the same proportion. Passing from that study, he did not go very largely into the world, but plunged into business ; I mean into the business of office ; and the limited and fixed methods and forms established there. Much knowledge is to be had undoubtedly in that line ; and there is no knowledge which is not valuable. But it may be truly said that men too much conversant in office are rarely minds of remarkable enlargement. Their habits of office are apt to give them a turn to think the substance of business not to be much more important than the forms ~~in~~ 20 in which it is conducted. These forms are adapted to ordinary occasions ; and therefore persons who are nurtured in office do admirably well as long as things go on in their common order ; but when the high roads are broken up, and the waters out, when a new and troubled scene is opened, and the file affords no precedent, then it is that a greater knowledge of mankind and far more extensive comprehension of things is requisite than ever office gave, or than office can ever give. Mr. Grenville thought better of the wisdom and power of human legislation than in truth it deserves. He conceived, and many conceived along with him, that the flourishing trade of this country was greatly owing to law and institution, and not quite so much to liberty ; for but too many are apt to believe regulation to be commerce, and taxes to be revenue.

Among regulations, that which stood first in reputation was his idol. I mean the act of navigation. He has often professed it to be so. The policy of that act is, I readily admit, in many respects well understood. But I do say that, if the act be suffered to run the full length of its principle, and is not changed and modified according to the change of times and the fluctuation of circumstances, it must do great mischief, and frequently even defeat its own purpose.

10 After the war, and in the last years of it, the trade of America had increased far beyond the speculations of the most sanguine imaginations. It swelled out on every side. It filled all its proper channels to the brim. It overflowed with a rich redundancy and, breaking its banks on the right and on the left, it spread out upon some places where it was indeed improper, upon others where it was only irregular. It is the nature of all greatness not to be exact, and great trade will always be attended with considerable abuses. The contraband will always keep pace in some  
20 measure with the fair trade. It should stand as a fundamental maxim that no vulgar precaution ought to be employed in the cure of evils which are closely connected with the cause of our prosperity. Perhaps this great person turned his eyes somewhat less than was just towards the incredible increase of the fair trade; and looked with something of too exquisite a jealousy towards the contraband. He certainly felt a singular degree of anxiety on the subject; and even began to act from that passion earlier than is commonly imagined. For whilst he was first lord  
30 of the admiralty, though not strictly called upon in his official line, he presented a very strong memorial to the lords of the treasury (my Lord Bute was then at the head of the board) heavily complaining of the growth of the illicit commerce in America. Some mischief happened even at that time from this over-earnest zeal. Much greater

and compacts all the force and sanction they can have ;— it does not arise from our vain institutions. Every good gift is of God ; all power is of God ;—and He, who has given the power, and from whom alone it originates, will never suffer the exercise of it to be practised upon any less solid foundation than the power itself. If then all dominion of man over man is the effect of the Divine disposition, it is bound by the eternal laws of Him that gave it, with which no human authority can dispense ; neither he that exercises it, nor even those who are subject to it : and, if they were mad enough to make an express compact that should release their magistrate from his duty, and should declare their lives, liberties, and properties dependent upon, not rules and laws, but his mere capricious will, that covenant would be void. The accepter of it has not his authority increased, but he has his crime doubled. Therefore can it be imagined, if this be true, that He will suffer this great gift of government, the greatest, the best that was ever given by God to mankind, to be the plaything 20 and the sport of the feeble will of a man who, by a blasphemous, absurd, and petulant usurpation, would place his own feeble, contemptible, ridiculous will in the place of the Divine wisdom and justice ?

The title of conquest makes no difference at all. No conquest can give such a right ; for conquest, that is force, cannot convert its own injustice into a just title, by which it may rule others at its pleasure. By conquest, which is a more immediate designation of the hand of God, the conqueror succeeds to all the painful duties and 30 subordination to the power of God which belonged to the sovereign whom he has displaced, just as if he had come in by the positive law of some descent or some election. To this at least he is strictly bound—he ought to govern them as he governs his own subjects. But every wise conqueror has gone much further than he was bound to

happened afterwards, when it operated with greater power in the highest department of the finances. The bonds of the act of navigation were straitened so much that America was on the point of having no trade, either contraband or legitimate.

(b) *Lord Chatham*

(From the same.)

I HAVE done with the third period of your policy : that of your repeal ; and the return of your ancient system, and your ancient tranquillity and concord. Sir, this period was not as long as it was happy. Another scene was opened, and other actors appeared on the stage. The state, <sup>10</sup> in the condition I have described it, was delivered into the hands of Lord Chatham, a great and celebrated name—a name that keeps the name of this country respectable in every other on the globe. It may be truly called,

Clarum et venerabile nomen  
Gentibus, et multum nostrae quod proderat urbi.

Sir, the venerable age of this great man, his merited rank, his superior eloquence, his splendid qualities, his eminent services, the vast space he fills in the eye of mankind, and, more than all the rest, his fall from power, <sup>20</sup> which, like death, canonizes and sanctifies a great character, will not suffer me to censure any part of his conduct. I am afraid to flatter him ; I am sure I am not disposed to blame him. Let those who have betrayed him by their adulation insult him with their malevolence. But what I do not presume to censure I may have leave to lament. For a wise man, he seemed to me at that time to be governed too much by general maxims. I speak with the freedom of history, and I hope without offence. One or two of these maxims, flowing from an opinion not the most indulgent <sup>30</sup> to our unhappy species, and surely a little too general,

led him into measures that were generally mischievous to himself, and for that reason, among others, perhaps fatal to his country ;—measures, the effect of which, I am afraid, are for ever incurable. He made an administration so checkered and speckled ; he put together a piece of joinery so crossly indented and whimsically dove-tailed ; a cabinet so variously inlaid ; such a piece of diversified mosaic ; such a tessellated pavement without cement ; here a bit of black stone, and there a bit of white ;  
10 patriots and courtiers, king's friends and republicans ; Whigs and Tories ; treacherous friends and open enemies ; —that it was, indeed, a very curious show ; but utterly unsafe to touch, and unsure to stand on. The colleagues whom he had assorted at the same boards stared at each other, and were obliged to ask, ‘ Sir, your name ? —Sir, you have the advantage of me—Mr. Such-a-one—I beg a thousand pardons—’ I venture to say, it did so happen that persons had a single office divided between them who had never spoken to each other in their lives,  
20 until they found themselves, they knew not how, pigging together, heads and points, in the same truckle-bed.<sup>1</sup>

Sir, in consequence of this arrangement, having put so much the larger part of his enemies and opposers into power, the confusion was such that his own principles could not possibly have any effect or influence in the conduct of affairs. If ever he fell into a fit of the gout, or if any other cause withdrew him from public cares, principles directly the contrary were sure to predominate. When he had executed his plan, he had not an inch of ground to  
30 stand upon. When he had accomplished his scheme of administration, he was no longer a minister.

When his face was hid but for a moment, his whole system was on a wide sea, without chart or compass.

<sup>1</sup> Supposed to allude to the Right Honourable Lord North, and George Cooke, Esq., who were made joint paymasters in the summer of 1766, on the removal of the Rockingham administration.

The gentlemen, his particular friends, who, with the names of various departments of ministry, were admitted to seem as if they acted a part under him, with a modesty that becomes all men, and with a confidence in him which was justified even in its extravagance by his superior abilities, had never in any instance presumed upon any opinion of their own. Deprived of his guiding influence, they were whirled about, the sport of every gust, and easily driven into any port; and as those who joined with them in manning the vessel were the most directly opposite to his <sup>10</sup> opinions, measures, and character, and far the most artful and most powerful of the set, they easily prevailed, so as to seize upon the vacant, unoccupied, and derelict minds of his friends, and instantly they turned the vessel wholly out of the course of his policy. As if it were to insult as well as to betray him, even long before the close of the first session of his administration, when everything was publicly transacted, and with great parade, in his name, they made an act declaring it highly just and expedient to raise a revenue in America. For even then, sir, even <sup>20</sup> before this splendid orb was entirely set, and while the western horizon was in a blaze with his descending glory, on the opposite quarter of the heavens arose another luminary, and, for his hour, became lord of the ascendant.

(c) *Charles Townshend*

(From the same.)

This light, too, is passed and set for ever. You understand, to be sure, that I speak of Charles Townshend, officially the reproducer of this fatal scheme, whom I cannot even now remember without some degree of sensibility. In truth, sir, he was the delight and ornament of this House, and the charm of every private society which he honoured <sup>30</sup> with his presence. Perhaps there never arose in this

country, nor in any country, a man of a more pointed and finished wit, and (where his passions were not concerned) of a more refined, exquisite, and penetrating judgement. If he had not so great a stock, as some have had who flourished formerly, of knowledge long treasured up, he knew, better by far than any man I ever was acquainted with, how to bring together within a short time all that was necessary to establish, to illustrate, and to decorate that side of the question he supported. He stated his matter skilfully and powerfully. He particularly excelled in a most luminous explanation and display of his subject. His style of argument was neither trite and vulgar, nor subtle and abstruse. He hit the House just between wind and water; and, not being troubled with too anxious a zeal for any matter in question, he was never more tedious or more earnest than the preconceived opinions and present temper of his hearers required, to whom he was always in perfect unison. He conformed exactly to the temper of the House; and he seemed to guide, because he was always sure to follow it. . . .

Besides the characters of the individuals that compose our body, it is impossible, Mr. Speaker, not to observe, that this House has a collective character of its own. That character, too, however imperfect, is not unamiable. Like all great public collections of men, you possess a marked love of virtue, and an abhorrence of vice. But among vices there is none which the House abhors in the same degree with *obstinacy*. Obstinacy, sir, is certainly a great vice; and in the changeful state of political affairs it is frequently the cause of great mischief. It happens, however, very unfortunately, that almost the whole line of the great and masculine virtues, constancy, gravity, magnanimity, fortitude, fidelity, and firmness, are closely allied to this disagreeable quality, of which you have so just an abhorrence; and, in their excess, all these virtues

very easily fall into it. He who paid such a punctilious attention to all your feelings, certainly took care not to shock them by that vice which is the most disgusting to you.

That fear of displeasing those who ought most to be pleased betrayed him sometimes into the other extreme. He had voted, and, in the year 1765, had been an advocate for the Stamp Act. Things and the disposition of men's mind were changed. In short, the Stamp Act began to be no favourite in this House. He therefore attended at the 10 private meeting in which the resolutions moved by a right honourable gentleman were settled; resolutions leading to the repeal. The next day he voted for that repeal. . . .

The very next session, as the fashion of this world passeth away, the repeal began to be in as bad an odour in this House as the Stamp Act had been in the session before. To conform to the temper which began to prevail, and to prevail mostly amongst those most in power, he declared, very early in the winter, that a revenue must be had out of America.

20

### *Progress and Enterprise of the Americans*

(From the Speech on Conciliation with the Colonies, March 22, 1775.)

MR. SPEAKER, I cannot prevail on myself to hurry over this great consideration. It is good for us to be here. We stand where we have an immense view of what is and what is past. Clouds indeed, and darkness rest upon the future. Let us, however, before we descend from this noble eminence, reflect that this growth of our national prosperity has happened within the short period of the life of man. It has happened within sixty-eight years. There are those alive whose memory might touch the two extremities. For instance, my Lord Bathurst might remember all the 30 stages of the progress. He was in 1704 of an age at least

to be made to comprehend such things. He was then old enough *acta parentum iam legere, et quae sit potuit cognoscere virtus*—Suppose, sir, that the angel of this auspicious youth, foreseeing the many virtues which made him one of the most amiable, as he is one of the most fortunate men of his age, had opened to him in vision that when, in the fourth generation, the third prince of the house of Brunswick had sat twelve years on the throne of that nation which (by the happy issue of moderate and healing counsels) 10 was to be made Great Britain, he should see his son, Lord Chancellor of England, turn back the current of hereditary dignity to its fountain, and raise him to an higher rank of peerage, whilst he enriched the family with a new one—if, amidst these bright and happy scenes of domestic honour and prosperity, that angel should have drawn up the curtain, and unfolded the rising glories of his country and, whilst he was gazing with admiration on the then commercial grandeur of England, the genius should point out to him a little speck, scarce visible in the mass of the national 20 interest, a small seminal principle, rather than a formed body, and should tell him—‘ Young man, there is America—which at this day serves for little more than to amuse you with stories of savage men, and uncouth manners, yet shall, before you taste of death, show itself equal to the whole of that commerce which now attracts the envy of the world. Whatever England has been growing to by a progressive increase of improvement, brought in by varieties of people, by succession of civilizing conquests and civilizing settlements in a series of seventeen hundred 30 years, you shall see as much added to her by America in the course of a single life ! ’ If this state of his country had been foretold to him, would it not require all the sanguine credulity of youth, and all the fervid glow of enthusiasm, to make him believe it ? Fortunate man, he has lived to see it ! Fortunate indeed, if he lives to see

nothing that shall vary the prospect, and cloud the setting of his day! . . .

As to the wealth which the colonies have drawn from the sea by your fisheries, you had all that matter fully opened at your bar. You surely thought those acquisitions of value, for they seemed even to excite your envy; and yet the spirit by which that enterprising employment has been exercised ought rather, in my opinion, to have raised your esteem and admiration. And pray, sir, what in the world is equal to it? Pass by the other parts, and look at 10 the manner in which the people of New England have of late carried on the whale fishery. Whilst we follow them among the tumbling mountains of ice, and behold them penetrating into the deepest frozen recesses of Hudson's Bay and Davis's Straits, whilst we are looking for them beneath the arctic circle, we hear that they have pierced into the opposite region of polar cold, that they are at the antipodes, and engaged under the frozen serpent of the south. Falkland Island, which seemed too remote and romantic an object for the grasp of national ambition, 20 is but a stage and resting-place in the progress of their victorious industry. Nor is the equinoctial heat more discouraging to them than the accumulated winter of both the poles. We know that whilst some of them draw the line and strike the harpoon on the coast of Africa, others run the longitude and pursue their gigantic game along the coast of Brazil. No sea but what is vexed by their fisheries. No climate that is not witness to their toils. Neither the perseverance of Holland, nor the activity of France, nor the dexterous and firm sagacity of English enterprise ever 30 carried this most perilous mode of hard industry to the extent to which it has been pushed by this recent people; a people who are still, as it were, but in the gristle and not yet hardened into the bone of manhood. When I contemplate these things; when I know that the colonies in

general owe little or nothing to any care of ours, and that they are not squeezed into this happy form by the constraints of watchful and suspicious government, but that, through a wise and salutary neglect, a generous nature has been suffered to take her own way to perfection ; when I reflect upon these effects, when I see how profitable they have been to us, I feel all the pride of power sink and all presumption in the wisdom of human contrivances melt and die away within me. My rigour relents. I pardon something to the spirit of liberty.

*The Policy of Force*

(From the same.)

I AM sensible, sir, that all which I have asserted in my detail is admitted in the gross ; but that quite a different conclusion is drawn from it. America, gentlemen say, is a noble object. It is an object well worth fighting for. Certainly it is, if fighting a people be the best way of gaining them. Gentlemen in this respect will be led to their choice of means by their complexions and their habits. Those who understand the military art will of course have some predilection for it. Those who wield the thunder of the state may have more confidence in the efficacy of arms. But I confess, possibly for want of this knowledge, my opinion is much more in favour of prudent management, than of force ; considering force not as an odious, but a feeble instrument for preserving a people so numerous, so active, so growing, so spirited as this, in a profitable and subordinate connexion with us.

First, sir, permit me to observe that the use of force alone is but *temporary*. It may subdue for a moment ; but it does not remove the necessity of subduing again : and a nation is not governed which is perpetually to be conquered.

My next objection is its *uncertainty*. Terror is not

always the effect of force ; and an armament is not a victory. If you do not succeed, you are without resource ; for, conciliation failing, force remains ; but, force failing, no further hope of reconciliation is left. Power and authority are sometimes bought by kindness ; but they can never be begged as alms by an impoverished and defeated violence.

A further objection to force is that you *impair the object* by your very endeavours to preserve it. The thing you fought for is not the thing which you recover : but so depreciated, sunk, wasted, and consumed in the contest. Nothing less will content me than *whole America*. I do not choose to consume its strength along with our own ; because in all parts it is the British strength that I consume. I do not choose to be caught by a foreign enemy at the end of this exhausting conflict ; and still less in the midst of it. I may escape ; but I can make no insurance against such an event. Let me add that I do not choose wholly to break the American spirit ; because it is the spirit that has made the country. 20

Lastly, we have no sort of *experience* in favour of force as an instrument in the rule of our colonies. Their growth and their utility has been owing to method altogether different. Our ancient indulgence has been said to be pursued to a fault. It may be so. But we know, if feeling is evidence, that our fault was more tolerable than our attempt to mend it ; and our sin far more salutary than our penitence.

#### *The Main Element of the American Character*

(From the same.)

THESE, sir, are my reasons for not entertaining that high opinion of untried force, by which many gentlemen, 30 for whose sentiments in other particulars I have great respect, seem to be so greatly captivated. But there is

still behind a third consideration concerning this object, which serves to determine my opinion on the sort of policy which ought to be pursued in the management of America, even more than its population and its commerce, I mean *its temper and character.*

In this character of the Americans, a love of freedom is the predominating feature which marks and distinguishes the whole: and as an ardent is always a jealous affection, your colonies become suspicious, restive, and <sup>10</sup> untractable, whenever they see the least attempt to wrest from them by force, or shuffle from them by chicane, what they think the only advantage worth living for. This fierce spirit of liberty is stronger in the English colonies probably than in any other people of the earth; and this from a great variety of powerful causes; which, to understand the true temper of their minds, and the direction which this spirit takes, it will not be amiss to lay open somewhat more largely.

First, the people of the colonies are descendants of <sup>20</sup> Englishmen. England, sir, is a nation, which still I hope respects, and formerly adored, her freedom. The colonists emigrated from you when this part of your character was most predominant; and they took this bias and direction the moment they parted from your hands. They are therefore not only devoted to liberty, but to liberty according to English ideas, and on English principles. Abstract liberty, like other mere abstractions, is not to be found. Liberty inheres in some sensible object; and every nation has formed to itself some favourite point, which by way of <sup>30</sup> eminence becomes the criterion of their happiness. It happened, you know, sir, that the great contests for freedom in this country were from the earliest times chiefly upon the question of taxing. Most of the contests in the ancient commonwealths turned primarily on the right of election of magistrates; or on the balance among the several

orders of the state. The question of money was not with them so immediate. But in England it was otherwise. On this point of taxes the ablest pens, and most eloquent tongues, have been exercised ; the greatest spirits have acted and suffered. In order to give the fullest satisfaction concerning the importance of this point, it was not only necessary for those who in argument defended the excellence of the English constitution to insist on this privilege of granting money as a dry point of fact, and to prove that the right had been acknowledged, in ancient parchments <sup>10</sup> and blind usages, to reside in a certain body called a House of Commons. They went much farther ; they attempted to prove, and they succeeded, that in theory it ought to be so, from the particular nature of a House of Commons, as an immediate representative of the people ; whether the old records had delivered this oracle or not. They took infinite pains to inculcate, as a fundamental principle, that in all monarchies the people must in effect themselves, mediately or immediately, possess the power of granting their own money, or no shadow of liberty could subsist. <sup>20</sup> The colonies draw from you, as with their life-blood, these ideas and principles. Their love of liberty, as with you, fixed and attached on this specific point of taxing. Liberty might be safe, or might be endangered in twenty other particulars without their being much pleased or alarmed. Here they felt its pulse ; and as they found that beat, they thought themselves sick or sound.

*You cannot cow the Americans by making them poor*  
(From the same.)

As far as I am capable of discerning, there are but three ways of proceeding relative to this stubborn spirit which prevails in your colonies and disturbs your government. These are—to change that spirit, as inconvenient, by removing the causes. To prosecute it as criminal. Or,

to comply with it as necessary. I would not be guilty of an imperfect enumeration ; I can think of but these three. Another has indeed been started, that of giving up the colonies ; but it met so slight a reception that I do not think myself obliged to dwell a great while upon it. It is nothing but a little sally of anger, like the frowardness of peevish children ; who, when they cannot get all they would have, are resolved to take nothing.

The first of these plans, to change the spirit as inconvenient, by removing the causes, I think is the most systematic proceeding. It is radical in its principle ; but it is attended with great difficulties ; some of them little short, as I conceive, of impossibilities. This will appear by examining into the plans which have been proposed.

As the growing population of the colonies is evidently one cause of their resistance, it was last session mentioned in both Houses by men of weight, and received not without applause, that, in order to check this evil, it would be proper  
20 for the crown to make no further grants of land. But to this scheme there are two objections. The first, that there is already so much unsettled land in private hands as to afford room for an immense future population, although the crown not only withheld its grants, but annihilated its soil. If this be the case, then the only effect of this avarice of desolation, this hoarding of a royal wilderness, would be to raise the value of the possessions in the hands of the great private monopolists, without any adequate check to the growing and alarming mischief of  
30 population.

But if you stopped your grants, what would be the consequence ? The people would occupy without grants. They have already so occupied in many places. You cannot station garrisons in every part of these deserts. If you drive the people from one place, they will carry on their

annual tillage, and remove with their flocks and herds to another. Many of the people in the back settlements are already little attached to particular situations. Already they have topped the Appalachian mountains. From thence they behold before them an immense plain, one vast, rich, level meadow: a square of five hundred miles. Over this they would wander without a possibility of restraint; they would change their manners with the habits of their life; would soon forget a government by which they were disowned; would become hordes of English Tartars; and, <sup>10</sup> pouring down upon your unfortified frontiers a fierce and irresistible cavalry, become masters of your governors and your counsellors, your collectors and comptrollers, and of all the slaves that adhered to them. Such would, and, in no long time, must be, the effect of attempting to forbid as a crime, and to suppress as an evil, the command and blessing of Providence, ' Increase and multiply'. Such would be the happy result of an endeavour to keep as a lair of wild beasts that earth which God, by an express charter, has given to the children of men. Far different, and surely <sup>20</sup> much wiser, has been our policy hitherto. Hitherto we have invited our people, by every kind of bounty, to fixed establishments. We have invited the husbandman to look to authority for his title. We have taught him piously to believe in the mysterious virtue of wax and parchment. We have thrown each tract of land, as it was peopled, into districts: that the ruling power should never be wholly out of sight. We have settled all we could; and we have carefully attended every settlement with government.

30

Adhering, sir, as I do, to this policy, as well as for the reasons I have just given, I think this new project of hedging-in population to be neither prudent nor practicable.

To impoverish the colonies in general, and in particular to arrest the noble course of their marine enterprises, would

be a more easy task. I freely confess it. We have shown a disposition to a system of this kind ; a disposition even to continue the restraint after the offence ; looking on ourselves as rivals to our colonies, and persuaded that of course we must gain all that they shall lose. Much mischief we may certainly do. The power inadequate to all other things is often more than sufficient for this. I do not look on the direct and immediate power of the colonies to resist our violence as very formidable. In this, however,  
10 I may be mistaken. But when I consider that we have colonies for no purpose but to be serviceable to us, it seems to my poor understanding a little preposterous to make them unserviceable, in order to keep them obedient. It is, in truth, nothing more than the old and, as I thought, exploded problem of tyranny, which proposes to beggar its subjects into submission. But remember, when you have completed your system of impoverishment, that nature still proceeds in her ordinary course ; that discontent will increase with misery ; and that there are critical  
20 moments in the fortunes of all states, when they who are too weak to contribute to your prosperity may be strong enough to complete your ruin. *Spoliatis arma supersunt.*

The temper and character which prevail in our colonies are, I am afraid, unalterable by any human art. We cannot, I fear, falsify the pedigree of this fierce people, and persuade them that they are not sprung from a nation in whose veins the blood of freedom circulates. The language in which they would hear you tell them this tale would detect the imposition ; your speech would betray you. An Englishman is the unfittest person on earth to argue another Englishman into slavery. . . .

But let us suppose all these moral difficulties got over. The ocean remains. You cannot pump this dry ; and as long as it continues in its present bed, so long all the causes which weaken authority by distance will continue.

' Ye gods, annihilate but space and time, and make two lovers happy ! '—was a pious and passionate prayer ;—but just as reasonable as many of the serious wishes of very grave and solemn politicians.

*Nor can you prosecute them as criminals*

(From the same.)

If then, sir, it seems almost desperate to think of any alterative course, for changing the moral causes (and not quite easy to remove the natural) which produce prejudices irreconcilable to the late exercise of our authority ; but that the spirit infallibly will continue ; and, continuing, will produce such effects as now embarrass us ; the 10 second mode under consideration is, to prosecute that spirit in its overt acts, as *criminal*.

At this proposition I must pause a moment. The thing seems a great deal too big for my ideas of jurisprudence. It should seem, to my way of conceiving such matters, that there is a very wide difference in reason and policy between the mode of proceeding on the irregular conduct of scattered individuals, or even of bands of men, who disturb order within the state, and the civil dissensions which may, from time to time, on great questions, agitate 20 the several communities which compose a great empire. It looks to me to be narrow and pedantic to apply the ordinary ideas of criminal justice to this great public contest. I do not know the method of drawing up an indictment against a whole people. I cannot insult and ridicule the feelings of millions of my fellow-creatures, as Sir Edward Coke insulted one excellent individual (Sir Walter Raleigh) at the bar. I am not ripe to pass sentence on the gravest public bodies, entrusted with magistracies of great authority and dignity, and charged with the 30 safety of their fellow-citizens, upon the very same title that I am. I really think that for wise men this is not

judicious ; for sober men, not decent ; for minds tinctured with humanity, not mild and merciful.

Perhaps, sir, I am mistaken in my idea of an empire, as distinguished from a single state or kingdom. But my idea of it is this ; that an empire is the aggregate of many states under one common head ; whether this head be a monarch, or a presiding republic. It does, in such constitutions, frequently happen (and nothing but the dismal, cold, dead uniformity of servitude can prevent its happening) that the subordinate parts have many local privileges and immunities. Between these privileges and the supreme common authority the line may be extremely nice. Of course disputes, often too very bitter disputes, and much ill blood will arise. But though every privilege is an exemption (in the case) from the ordinary exercise of the supreme authority, it is no denial of it. The claim of a privilege seems rather, *ex vi termini*, to imply a superior power. For to talk of the privileges of a state, or of a person, who has no superior, is hardly any better than speaking nonsense. Now, in such unfortunate quarrels among the component parts of a great political union of communities I can scarcely conceive anything more completely imprudent than for the head of the empire to insist that, if any privilege is pleaded against his will or his acts, his whole authority is denied ; instantly to proclaim rebellion, to beat to arms, and to put the offending provinces under the ban. Will not this, sir, very soon teach the provinces to make no distinctions on their part ? Will it not teach them that the government against which a claim of liberty is tantamount to high treason is a government to which submission is equivalent to slavery ? It may not always be quite convenient to impress dependent communities with such an idea.

We are, indeed, in all disputes with the colonies, by the necessity of things, the judge. It is true, sir. But I confess,

that the character of judge in my own cause is a thing that frightens me. Instead of filling me with pride, I am exceedingly humbled by it. I cannot proceed with a stern, assured, judicial confidence, until I find myself in something more like a judicial character. I must have these hesitations as long as I am compelled to recollect that, in my little reading upon such contests as these, the sense of mankind has at least as often decided against the superior as the subordinate power. Sir, let me add too that the opinion of my having some abstract right in my favour <sup>10</sup> would not put me much at my ease in passing sentence; unless I could be sure that there were no rights which, in their exercise under certain circumstances, were not the most odious of all wrongs and the most vexatious of all injustice.

*Conciliation the only remedy*

(From the same.)

If then the removal of the causes of this spirit of American liberty be, for the greater part, or rather entirely, impracticable; if the ideas of criminal process be inapplicable, or if applicable, are in the highest degree inexpedient; what way yet remains? No way is open, but the third and last <sup>20</sup>—to comply with the American spirit as necessary; or, if you please, to submit to it as a necessary evil.

If we adopt this mode: if we mean to conciliate and concede; let us see of what nature the concession ought to be: to ascertain the nature of our concession, we must look at their complaint. The colonies complain that they have not the characteristic mark and seal of British freedom. They complain that they are taxed in a parliament in which they are not represented. If you mean to satisfy them at all, you must satisfy them with regard to this <sup>30</sup> complaint. If you mean to please any people, you must give them the boon which they ask; not what you may

think better for them, but of a kind totally different. Such an act may be a wise regulation, but it is no concession ; whereas our present theme is the mode of giving satisfaction.

Sir, I think you must perceive that I am resolved this day to have nothing at all to do with the question of the right of taxation. Some gentlemen startle—but it is true ; I put it totally out of the question. It is less than nothing in my consideration. I do not indeed wonder, nor will <sup>10</sup> you, sir, that gentlemen of profound learning are fond of displaying it on this profound subject. But my consideration is narrow, confined, and wholly limited to the policy of the question. I do not examine whether the giving away a man's money be a power excepted and reserved out of the general trust of government ; and how far all mankind, in all forms of polity, are entitled to an exercise of that right by the charter of nature. Or whether, on the contrary, a right of taxation is necessarily involved in the general principle of legislation, and inseparable from the <sup>20</sup> ordinary supreme power. These are deep questions, where great names militate against each other ; where reason is perplexed ; and an appeal to authorities only thickens the confusion. For high and reverend authorities lift up their heads on both sides ; and there is no sure footing in the middle. This point is the *great Serbonian bog, betwixt Damiata and Mount Casius old, where armies whole have sunk.* I do not intend to be overwhelmed in that bog, though in such respectable company. The question with me is, not whether you have a right to render your people <sup>30</sup> miserable ; but whether it is not your interest to make them happy. It is not what a lawyer tells me I *may* do ; but what humanity, reason, and justice tell me I ought to do. Is a politic act the worse for being a generous one ? Is no concession proper, but that which is made from your want of right to keep what you grant ? Or does it lessen

the grace or dignity of relaxing in the exercise of an odious claim because you have your evidence-room full of titles and your magazines stuffed with arms to enforce them ? What signify all those titles, and all those arms ? Of what avail are they; when the reason of the thing tells me that the assertion of my title is the loss of my suit ; and that I could do nothing but wound myself by the use of my own weapons ?

*The Logical Chain of Burke's Policy*

(From the same.)

My resolutions therefore mean to establish the equity and justice of a taxation of America, by *grant*, and not by *imposition*. To mark the *legal competency* of the colony assemblies for the support of their government in peace, and for public aids in time of war. To acknowledge that this legal competency has had a *dutiful and beneficial exercise*; and that experience has shown the *benefit of their grants*, and the *futility of parliamentary taxation as a method of supply*. . . .

Sir, I shall open the whole plan to you together, with such observations on the motions as may tend to illustrate them where they may want explanation. The first is 20 a resolution—' That the colonies and plantations of Great Britain in North America, consisting of fourteen separate governments, and containing two millions and upwards of free inhabitants, have not had the liberty and privilege of electing and sending any knights and burgesses, or others, to represent them in the high court of parliament.' This is a plain matter of fact, necessary to be laid down, and (excepting the description) it is laid down in the language of the constitution ; it is taken nearly *verbatim* from acts of parliament.

The second is like unto the first—' That the said colonies and plantations have been liable to, and bounded by,

several subsidies, payments, rates, and taxes, given and granted by parliament, though the said colonies and plantations have not their knights and burgesses in the said high court of parliament, of their own election, to represent the condition of their country ; by lack whereof they have been oftentimes touched and grieved by subsidies given, granted, and assented to in the said court, in a manner prejudicial to the commonwealth, quietness, rest, and peace of the subjects inhabiting within the same.'

Is this description too hot, or too cold, too strong, or too weak ? Does it arrogate too much to the supreme legislature ? Does it lean too much to the claims of the people ? If it runs into any of these errors, the fault is not mine. It is the language of your own ancient acts of parliament.

Non meus hic sermo, sed quae praecepit Ofellus,  
rusticus, abnormis sapiens.

It is the genuine produce of the ancient, rustic, manly, home-bred sense of this country. I did not dare to rub off a particle of the venerable rust that rather adorns and preserves than destroys the metal. It would be a profanation to touch with a tool the stones which construct the sacred altar of peace. I would not violate with modern polish the ingenuous and noble roughness of these truly constitutional materials. Above all things, I was resolved not to be guilty of tampering : the odious vice of restless and unstable minds. I put my foot in the tracks of our forefathers ; where I can neither wander nor stumble. Determining to fix articles of peace, I was resolved not to be wise beyond what was written ; I was resolved to use nothing else than the form of sound words ; to let others abound in their own sense ; and carefully to abstain from all expressions of my own. What the law has said, I say. In all things else I am silent. I have no organ but for her words. This, if it be not ingenious, I am sure is safe. . . .

The next proposition is—‘ That, from the distance of the said colonies, and from other circumstances, no method hath hitherto been devised for procuring a representation in parliament for the said colonies.’ This is an assertion of a fact. I go no further on the paper; though, in my private judgement, a useful representation is impossible; I am sure it is not desired by them; nor ought it perhaps by us; but I abstain from opinions.

The fourth resolution is—‘ That each of the said colonies hath within itself a body, chosen in part, or in the whole, 10 by the freemen, freeholders, or other free inhabitants thereof, commonly called the general assembly or general court; with powers legally to raise, levy, and assess, according to the several usage of such colonies, duties and taxes towards defraying all sorts of public services.’

This competence in the colony assemblies is certain. It is proved by the whole tenor of their acts of supply in all the assemblies, in which the constant style of granting is, ‘an aid to his majesty’; and acts granting to the crown 2c have regularly for near a century passed the public offices without dispute. . . .

The fifth resolution is also a resolution of fact—‘ That the said general assemblies, general courts, or other bodies legally qualified as aforesaid, have at sundry times freely granted several large subsidies and public aids for his majesty’s service, according to their abilities, when required thereto by letter from one of his majesty’s principal secretaries of state; and that their right to grant the same, and their cheerfulness and sufficiency in the said grants, 30 have been at sundry times acknowledged by parliament.’ . . .

colonies, and more beneficial and conducive to the public service, than the mode of giving and granting aids in parliament, to be raised and paid in the said colonies.' This makes the whole of the fundamental part of the plan. The conclusion is irresistible. You cannot say that you were driven by any necessity to an exercise of the utmost rights of legislature. You cannot assert that you took on yourselves the task of imposing colony taxes from the want of another legal body that is competent to the purpose of supplying the exigencies of the state without wounding the prejudices of the people. Neither is it true that the body so qualified, and having that competence, had neglected the duty.

*The Well-tried Virtue of Compromise*

(From the same.)

I do not know that the colonies have, in any general way, or in any cool hour, gone much beyond the demand of immunity in relation to taxes. It is not fair to judge of the temper or dispositions of any man, or any set of men, when they are composed and at rest, from their conduct, or their expressions, in a state of disturbance and irritation.  
20 It is besides a very great mistake to imagine that mankind follow up practically any speculative principle, either of government or of freedom, as far as it will go in argument and logical illation. We Englishmen stop very short of the principles upon which we support any given part of our constitution ; or even the whole of it together. I could easily, if I had not already tired you, give you very striking and convincing instances of it. This is nothing but what is natural and proper. All government, indeed every human benefit and enjoyment, every virtue, and every  
30 prudent act, is founded on compromise and barter. We balance inconveniences ; we give and take ; we remit some rights, that we may enjoy others ; and we choose

rather to be happy citizens than subtle disputants. As we must give away some natural liberty, to enjoy civil advantages; so we must sacrifice some civil liberties for the advantages to be derived from the communion and fellowship of a great empire. But, in all fair dealings, the thing bought must bear some proportion to the purchase paid. None will barter away the immediate jewel of his soul. Though a great house is apt to make slaves haughty, yet it is purchasing a part of the artificial importance of a great empire too dear to pay for it all essential rights and <sup>10</sup> all the intrinsic dignity of human nature. None of us who would not risk his life rather than fall under a government purely arbitrary. But although there are some amongst us who think our constitution wants many improvements, to make it a complete system of liberty, perhaps none who are of that opinion would think it right to aim at such improvement by disturbing his country, and risking every-  
thing that is dear to him. In every arduous enterprise, we consider what we are to lose as well as what we are to gain; and the more and better stake of liberty every <sup>20</sup> people possess, the less they will hazard in a vain attempt to make it more. These are *the cords of man*. Man acts from adequate motives relative to his interest; and not on metaphysical speculations. Aristotle, the great master of reasoning, cautions us, and with great weight and propriety, against this species of delusive geometrical accuracy in moral arguments, as the most fallacious of all sophistry.

The Americans will have no interest contrary to the grandeur and glory of England, when they are not oppressed by the weight of it; and they will rather be inclined to <sup>30</sup> respect the acts of a superintending legislature, when they see them the acts of that power which is itself the security, not the rival, of their secondary importance. In this assurance, my mind most perfectly acquiesces, and I confess I feel not the least alarm from the discontents which are

to arise from putting people at their ease ; nor do I apprehend the destruction of this empire from giving, by an act of free grace and indulgence, to two millions of my fellow-citizens some share of those rights upon which I have always been taught to value myself.

It is said, indeed, that this power of granting, vested in American assemblies, would dissolve the unity of the empire ; which was preserved entire, although Wales, and Chester, and Durham were added to it. Truly, Mr.  
10 Speaker, I do not know what this unity means ; nor has it ever been heard of, that I know, in the constitutional policy of this country. The very idea of subordination of parts excludes this notion of simple and undivided unity. England is the head ; but she is not the head and the members too. Ireland has ever had from the beginning a separate, but not an independent, legislature ; which, far from distracting, promoted the union of the whole. Everything was sweetly and harmoniously disposed through both islands for the conservation of English dominion and  
20 the communication of English liberties. I do not see that the same principles might not be carried into twenty islands, and with the same good effect. This is my model with regard to America, as far as the internal circumstances of the two countries are the same. I know no other unity of this empire than I can draw from its example during these periods, when it seemed to my poor understanding more united than it is now, or than it is likely to be by the present methods.

*Freedom a Lucrative Principle*

(From the same.)

BUT what (says the financier) is peace to us without  
30 money ? Your plan gives us no revenue. No ! But it does—For it secures to the subject the power of REFUSAL ;  
the first of all revenues. Experience is a cheat, and fact

a liar, if this power in the subject of proportioning his grant, or of not granting at all, has not been found the richest mine of revenue ever discovered by the skill or by the fortune of man. It does not indeed vote you £152,752 : 11 : 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ ths, nor any other paltry limited sum.—But it gives the strong box itself, the fund, the bank, from whence only revenues can arise amongst a people sensible of freedom: *Posita luditur arca.* Cannot you in England; cannot you at this time of day; cannot you, a House of Commons, trust to the principle which has raised so mighty 10 a revenue, and accumulated a debt of near 140 millions in this country? Is this principle to be true in England and false everywhere else? Is it not true in Ireland? Has it not hitherto been true in the colonies? Why should you presume that, in any country, a body duly constituted for any function will neglect to perform its duty, and abdicate its trust? Such a presumption would go against all governments in all modes. But, in truth, this dread of penury of supply from a free assembly has no foundation in nature. For first observe that, beside the desire which all men have 20 naturally of supporting the honour of their own government, that sense of dignity, and that security to property, which ever attend freedom have a tendency to increase the stock of the free community. Most may be taken where most is accumulated. And what is the soil or climate where experience has not uniformly proved that the voluntary flow of heaped-up plenty, bursting from the weight of its own rich luxuriance, has ever run with a more copious stream of revenue than could be squeezed from the dry husks of oppressed indigence by the straining of 30 all the politic machinery in the world.

Next we know, that parties must ever exist in a free country. We know, too, that the emulations of such parties, their contradictions, their reciprocal necessities, their hopes, and their fears must send them all in their

turns to him that holds the balance of the state. The parties are the gamesters ; but government keeps the table, and is sure to be the winner in the end. When this game is played, I really think it is more to be feared that the people will be exhausted than that government will not be supplied. Whereas, whatever is got by acts of absolute power ill obeyed, because odious, or by contracts ill kept, because constrained, will be narrow, feeble, uncertain, and precarious. '*Ease would retract vows made in pain, as violent and void.*'

I, for one, protest against compounding our demands : I declare against compounding for a poor limited sum, the immense, ever growing, eternal debt, which is due to generous government from protected freedom.

*Liberty the Bond of the British Empire*

(From the same.)

IF America gives you taxable objects, on which you lay your duties here, and gives you, at the same time, a surplus by a foreign sale of her commodities to pay the duties on these objects, which you tax at home, she has performed her part to the British revenue. But with regard to her own internal establishments, she may, I doubt not she will, contribute in moderation. I say in moderation ; for she ought not to be permitted to exhaust herself. She ought to be reserved to a war ; the weight of which, with the enemies that we are most likely to have, must be considerable in her quarter of the globe. There she may serve you and serve you essentially.

For that service, for all service, whether of revenue, trade, or empire, my trust is in her interest in the British constitution. My hold of the colonies is in the close affection which grows from common names, from kindred blood, from similar privileges, and equal protection. These are ties which, though light as air, are as strong as links of

iron. Let the colonies always keep the idea of their civil rights associated with your government ;—they will cling and grapple to you ; and no force under heaven would be of power to tear them from their allegiance. But let it be once understood that your government may be one thing, and their privileges another ; that these two things may exist without any mutual relation ; the cement is gone ; the cohesion is loosened ; and everything hastens to decay and dissolution. As long as you have the wisdom to keep the sovereign authority of this country as the sanctuary of 10 liberty, the sacred temple consecrated to our common faith, wherever the chosen race and sons of England worship freedom, they will turn their faces towards you. The more they multiply, the more friends you will have ; the more ardently they love liberty, the more perfect will be their obedience. Slavery they can have anywhere. It is a weed that grows in every soil. They may have it from Spain, they may have it from Prussia. But, until you become lost to all feeling of your true interest and your natural dignity, freedom they can have from none but you. This 20 is the commodity of price, of which you have the monopoly. This is the true act of navigation which binds to you the commerce of the colonies, and through them secures to you the wealth of the world. Deny them this participation of freedom, and you break that sole bond which originally made, and must still preserve the unity of the empire. Do not entertain so weak an imagination as that your registers and your bonds, your affidavits and your sufferances, your cockets and your clearances, are what form the great securities of your commerce. Do not dream that your 30 letters of office, and your instructions, and your suspending clauses are the things that hold together the great con-texture of this mysterious whole. These things do not make your government. Dead instruments, passive tools as they are, it is the spirit of the English communion that

gives all their life and efficacy to them. the English constitution, which, infus mighty mass, pervades, feeds, unites, inv every part of the empire, even down member.

Is it not the same virtue which does e here in England ? Do you imagine, the land-tax act which raises your revenue : annual vote in the committee of supply to your army ? or that it is the mutiny bil it with bravery and discipline ? No ! su the love of the people ; it is their atta government, from the sense of the deep sta such a glorious institution, which gives you your navy, and infuses into both that li without which your army would be a b your navy nothing but rotten timber.

All this, I know well enough, will soundrical to the profane herd of those vulgar 20 politicians who have no place among us ; who think that nothing exists but what is grc and who therefore, far from being qualifiec of the great movement of empire, are not fit in the machine. But to men truly initia taught these ruling and master principles opinion of such men as I have mentioned stantial existence, are in truth everything. Magnanimity in politics is not seldom the and a great empire and little minds go ill t 30 are conscious of our situation, and glow wit places as becomes our station and ourselve auspicte all our public proceedings on An old warning of the Church, *Sursum corda* ! elevate our minds to the greatness of that the order of Providence has called us. B

the dignity of this high calling our ancestors have turned a savage wilderness into a glorious empire: and have made the most extensive, and the only honourable conquests not by destroying, but by promoting the wealth, the number, the happiness of the human race. Let us get an American revenue as we have got an American empire. English privileges have made it all that it is; English privileges alone will make it all it can be.

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## INDIA

*The Peoples under British Rule*

(From the Speech on the East India Bill, December 1, 1783.)

My next inquiry to that of the number is the quality and description of the inhabitants. This multitude of 10 men does not consist of an abject and barbarous populace; much less of gangs of savages, like the Guaranes and Chiquitos, who wander on the waste borders of the river of Amazons, or the Plate; but a people for ages civilized and cultivated: cultivated by all the arts of polished life, whilst we were yet in the woods. There have been (and still the skeletons remain) princes once of great dignity, authority, and opulence. There are to be found the chiefs of tribes and nations. There is to be found an ancient and venerable priesthood, the depository 20 of their laws, learning, and history, the guides of the people whilst living, and their consolation in death; a nobility of great antiquity and renown; a multitude of cities, not exceeded in population and trade by those of the first class in Europe; merchants and bankers, individual houses of whom have once vied in capital with the Bank of England, whose credit had often supported a tottering state, and preserved their governments in the midst of war and desolation; millions of ingenious manufacturers

and mechanics ; millions of the most diligent, and not the least intelligent, tillers of the earth. There are to be found almost all the religions professed by men, the Braminical, the Mussulman, the Eastern and the Western Christian.

If I were to take the whole aggregate of our possessions there, I should compare it, as the nearest parallel I can find, with the empire of Germany. Our immediate possessions I should compare with the Austrian dominions,  
10 and they would not suffer in the comparison. The nabob of Oude might stand for the King of Prussia ; the nabob of Arcot I would compare, as superior in territory, and equal in revenue, to the Elector of Saxony. Cheyt Sing, the rajah of Benares, might well rank with the Prince of Hesse, at least ; and the rajah of Tanjore (though hardly equal in extent of dominion, superior in revenue) to the Elector of Bavaria. The Polygars and the northern Zemindars, and other great chiefs might well class with the rest of the princes, dukes, counts, marquises, and  
20 bishops in the empire ; all of whom I mention to honour, and surely without disparagement to any or all of those most respectable princes and grandees.

All this vast mass, composed of so many orders and classes of men, is again infinitely diversified by manners, by religion, by hereditary employment, through all their possible combinations. This renders the handling of India a matter in a high degree critical and delicate. But oh ! it has been handled rudely indeed. Even some of the reformers seem to have forgot that they had any  
30 thing to do but to regulate the tenants of a manor, or the shopkeepers of the next county town.

*The Peculiar Task of its Government*

(From the Speech on the Impeachment of Warren Hastings : Third Day, February 15, 1788.)

My lords, the first description of people who are subjected virtually to the British empire through those mediums which I have described to you are the original inhabitants of Hindustan, who have in all time, and beyond all the eras which we use (I mean always the two grand eras excepted), been the aboriginal inhabitants and proprietors of that country ; with manners, religion, customs, and usages appropriated to themselves, and little resembling those of the rest of mankind. This description of men is commonly called Gentoos. The system and principle of 10 that government is locality. Their laws, their manners, their religion, are all local.

Their legislator, whoever he was (for who he was is a matter lost in the midst of a most obscure antiquity), had it as a great leading principle of his policy to connect the people with their soil. Accordingly, by one of those anomalies which a larger acquaintance with our species daily discovers, and which perhaps an attentive reflection might explain in the nature of man, this aboriginal people of India, who are the softest in their manners of any of 20 our race, approaching almost to feminine tenderness, who are formed constitutionally benevolent, and in many particulars made to fill a larger circle of benevolence than our morals take in; who extend their goodwill to the whole animal creation,—these people are, of all nations, the most unalliable to any other part of mankind. They cannot—the highest orders of them, at least, cannot—come into contact with any other. That bond which is one of the chief instruments of society, and which, supporting the individual, connects the species, can have no 30 existence with them—I mean the convivial bond. That

race can be held to no other by that great link of life. No Hindoo can mix at meals even with those on whom he depends for the meat he eats. This circumstance renders it difficult for us to enter with due sympathy into their concerns, or for them to enter into ours, even when we meet on the same ground. But there are other circumstances which render our intercourse, in our mutual relation, very full of difficulty. The sea is between us. The mass of that element which, by appearing to disconnect,  
10 unites mankind, is to them a forbidden road. It is a great gulf fixed between you and them—not so much that elementary gulf, but that gulf which manners, opinions, and laws have radicated in the very nature of the people. None of their high castes, without great danger to his situation, religion, rank, and estimation, can ever pass the sea ; and this forbids, for ever, all direct communication between that country and this. That material and affecting circumstance, my lords, makes it ten times more necessary, since they cannot come to us, to keep a strict eye upon all  
20 persons who go to them. It imposes upon us a stricter duty to guard, with a firm and powerful vigilance, those whose principles of conscience weaken their principles of self-defence. If we undertake to govern the inhabitants of such a country, we must govern them upon their own principles and maxims, and not upon ours. We must not think to force them into the narrow circle of our ideas ; we must extend ours to take in their system of opinions and rites, and the necessities which result from both.  
All change on their part is absolutely impracticable. We  
30 have more versatility of character and manners, and it is we who must conform. We know what the empire of opinion is in human nature. I had almost said that the law of opinion was human nature itself.

*Conquest and Arbitrary Power*

(From the same : Fourth Day, February 16, 1788.)

THERE is a sacred veil to be drawn over the beginnings of all governments. Ours, in India, had an origin like those which time has sanctified by obscurity. Time, in the origin of most governments, has thrown this mysterious veil over them ; prudence and discretion make it necessary to throw something of the same drapery over more recent foundations, in which otherwise the fortune, the genius, the talents, and military virtue of this nation never shone more conspicuously. But, whatever necessity might hide or excuse or palliate in the acquisition of power, a wise <sup>10</sup> nation, when it has once made a revolution upon its own principles and for its own ends, rests there. The first step to empire is revolution, by which power is conferred ; the next is good laws, good orders, good institutions, to give that power stability. . . .

*We* have arbitrary power ! My lords, the East India Company have not arbitrary power to give him ; the king has no arbitrary power to give him ; your lordships have not ; nor the Commons ; nor the whole legislature. We have no arbitrary power to give, because arbitrary power <sup>20</sup> is a thing which neither any man can hold nor any man can give. No man can lawfully govern himself according to his own will, much less can one person be governed by the will of another. We are all born in subjection, all born equally, high and low, governors and governed, in subjection to one great, immutable, pre-existent law, prior to all our devices, and prior to all our contrivances, paramount to all our ideas and all our sensations, antecedent to our very existence, by which we are knit and connected in the eternal frame of the universe, out of which we cannot stir. <sup>30</sup>

This great law does not arise from our conventions or compacts ; on the contrary, it gives to our conventions